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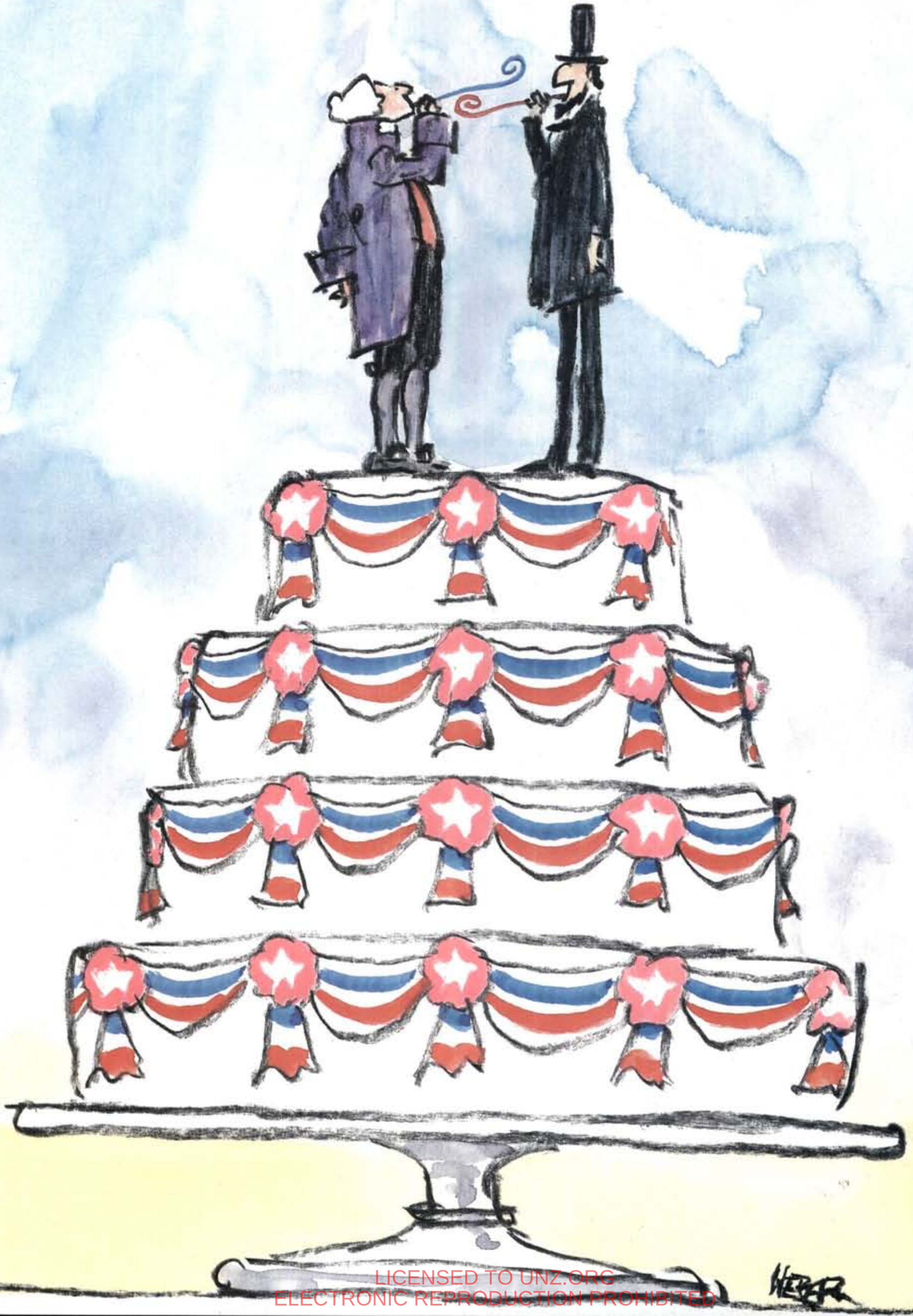

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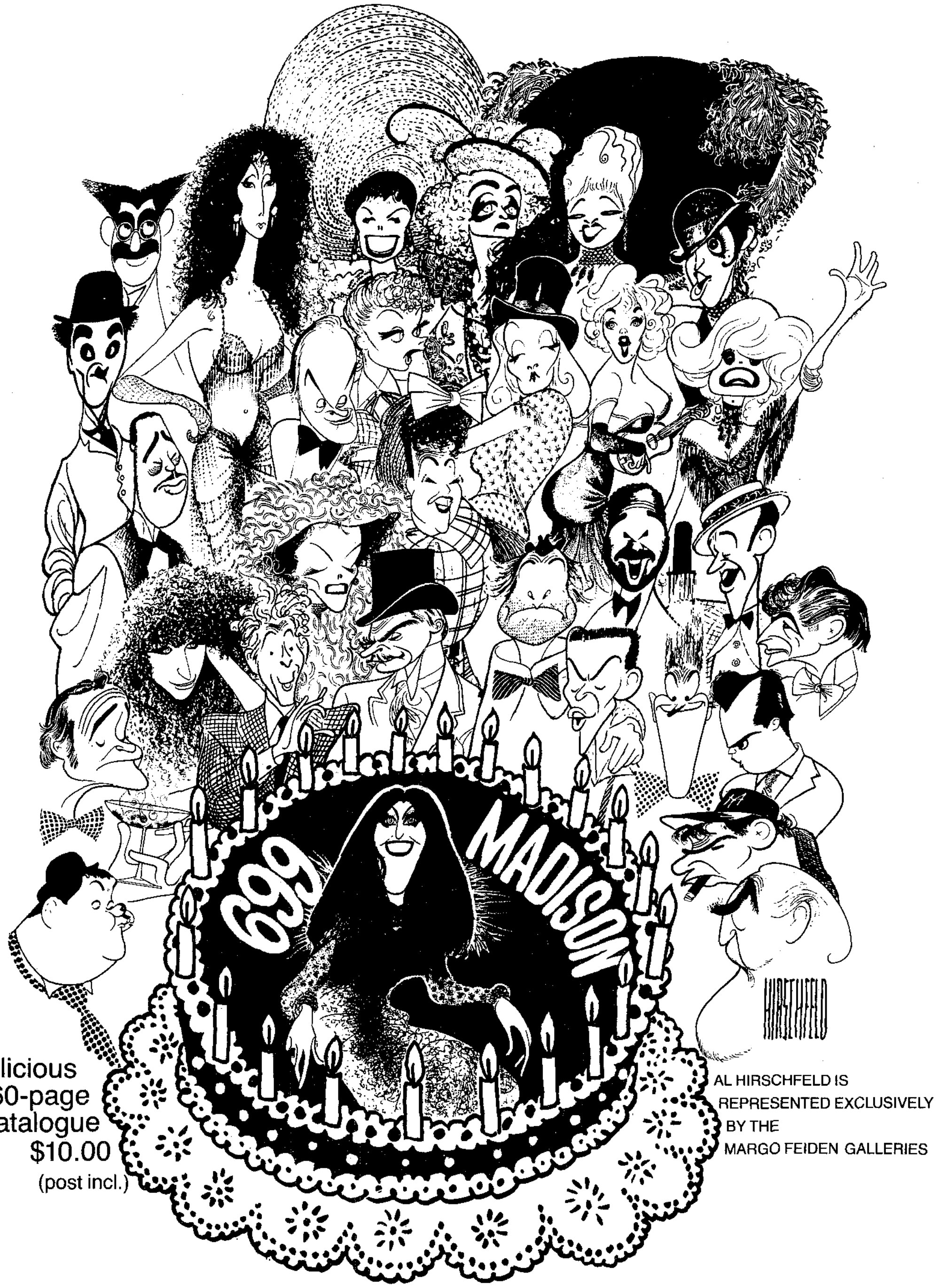

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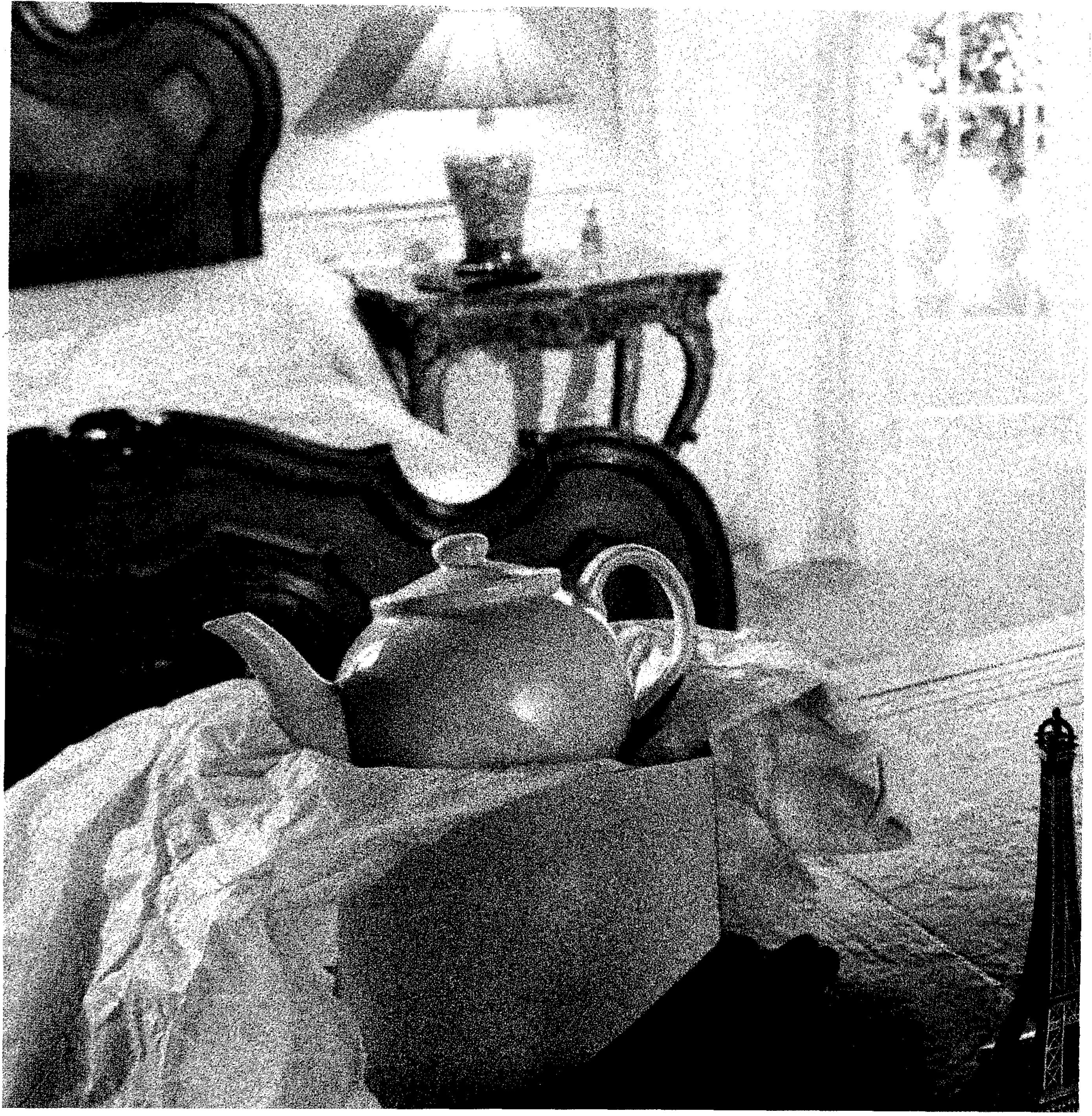

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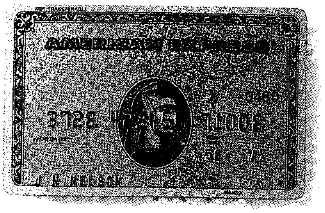

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

An awful lot of one-act plays seem, suddenly, to have washed up on these shores. "Carbondale Dreams," Steven Sater's trilogy about a family of Ugly-American Jews in the Midwest, began life as a double bill at the Perry Street Theatre—a pair of one-acts called "Bradley" and "Beth" (a third, "Arnold," has since been added). Before moving to the Kaufman, its current location, the show was at the Judith Anderson, where we went to see it and found it so tiresome, unpleasant, and stupid that we scarpered at intermission. Sater's work (what we saw of it) seems entirely motivated by hatred—the worst kind of Jewish self-hatred—and hostility toward one's parents (the play reeks bitterly of autobiography). Perhaps he needs to be reminded that the best revenge is living well, not writing poorly. Joe Pintauro's "Moving Targets," at the Vineyard Theatre, is almost equally hard to take—and would have been difficult even if only four or five of the evening's nine plays were being presented. Each follows the same pattern: a hackneyed situation leading up to some gratuitously shocking or perverse sexual revelation, overt or implied.

By contrast, the program at the Manhattan Punch Line's sixth annual festival of one-act comedies is a delight—easily the best that Steve Kaplan, the artistic director, has put together in several seasons. There isn't a bad play among the festival's nine offerings, though Evening B presents the best mixture of comedy and seriousness. In Evening A, Tom Donaghy's "Portfolio," set in a fashion studio, is the most sophisticated and profoundly funny. But the festival's two pièces de résistance come at the end of Evening B: "Fellow Travellers," Jeffrey Hatcher's brilliant satire of New York's political literati, and Roger Hedden's "The Artistic Direction," which, to enjoy it properly, asks that we accept the premise that critics chat backstage with directors before filing their reviews, and that little theatres (like the Punch Line) stand or fall on the strength of weekend box-office take.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Come as You Are—A new play written and directed by N. Richard Nash, the author of "The Rainmaker." With Mark Hofmaier. Preview on Feb. 13. Opens Feb. 14 at 8. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 564-8038.)

Jonah—A new musical by Elizabeth Swados, based on Robert Nathan's novel "Jonah and the Whale." In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Miss Margarida's Way—Estelle Parsons reprises her original role in this production of Roberto Athayde's 1977 play. Previews Feb. 13-14. Opens Feb. 15 at 7. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **burner's frolic**, by Charles Fuller. With Adam Wade and Charles Weldon. In previews. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545.)

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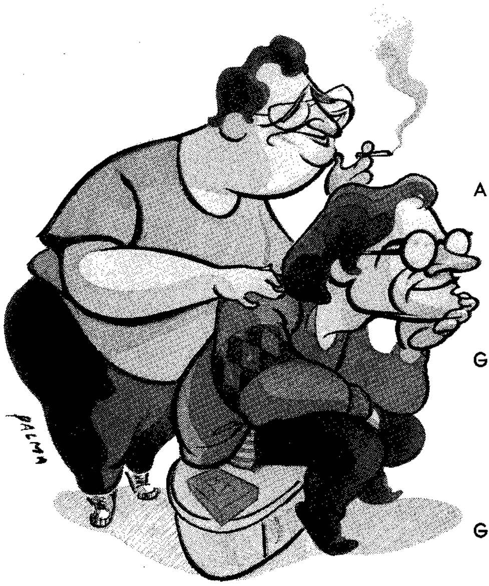
18	19	20	21			

One of the Guys—A comedy by Marilyn Suzanne Miller about a Central Park baseball team. With Stephen Collins and Bruce MacVittie. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Square One—Richard Thomas and Dianne Wiest have the leads in a new play by Steve Tesich, which Jerry Zaks directed. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

When She Danced—A play about Isadora Duncan by Martin Sherman. With Elizabeth Ashley, Jonathan Walker, and Marcia Jean Kurtz. Previews through Feb. 18. Opens Feb. 19 at 8. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)



Bruce MacVittie and Stephen Collins in "One of the Guys"

NEW THIS SEASON

Away Alone—No one could accuse Janet Noble's sweet, feckless comedy about young Irish immigrants in the Bronx of being overly sophisticated. The play is innocent, sentimental, and old-fashioned—a little like the characters it portrays—but the feeling it creates in the audience becomes infectious, a little like the laughter it inspires. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Carbondale Dreams—Three one-acts by Steven Sater. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 563-1684.)

The Circle—Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, Stewart Granger, and an able supporting company have raised Somerset Maugham to the heights of Sheridan and Congreve. The play is about an elderly couple who pay a visit to the wife's middle-aged son, whom she deserted thirty years before. Brian Murray directed the fine production. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/89.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Circle Repertory Company—The third play of the season is **imagining brad**, a comedy by Peter Hedges. With Sharon Ernster and Erin Cressida Wilson. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076. Closes Feb. 25.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in absolutely top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Closer than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music), as sung and performed by Brent Barrett, Sally Mayers, Richard Muenz, and Lynne Wintersteller. They are a gifted quartet, and lucky to have such attractive, humorous, and tender songs to sing and words to speak. The fact that there is no amplification is an extra boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde—Another example of the current literary and dramatic vogue for recasting the strange case, this time by Georg Osterman. The production has the Ridiculous Theatrical Company's usual vices (excessive length, scattershot antics) and virtues (clever sets, animated performances by, among others, Everett Quinton, Cheryl Reeves, and Eureka). (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

The Doctor's Dilemma—An able revival of Bernard Shaw's rundown on the medical profession. Although the play's romantic element goes by the board, its comedy, under Larry Carpenter's direction, rolls merrily along. With Charles Keating (as the doctor with the dilemma), Victor Raider-Wexler, Jerome Kilty, George Hall, Ian Stuart, and Gregg Almquist as his colleagues. The fine settings were designed by Campbell Baird. (2/12/90) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Feb. 18.)

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Juan Darién—A revival of a 1988 Music-Theatre Group production, performed by a company of actors, dancers, musicians, and puppeteers. Conceived by Julie Taymor and Elliot Goldenthal (who also wrote the music), and based on a short story by Horacio Quiroga. Directed by Ms. Taymor. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes March 3.)

Lear—In this Mabou Mines adaptation of Shakespeare's "King Lear," the title character is a nineteen-fifties Southern woman (played by Ruth Maleczech) with three sons. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980. Closes Feb. 18.)

Manhattan Punch Line—Presenting the annual festival of new one-act comedies. Evening A: "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread," by David Ives; "Portfolio," by Tom Donaghy; "The Show Must Go On," by Laurence Klavan; and "How Are Things in Costa del Fuego?," by Rick Louis. . . . ¶ Evening B: "The Fertilization Opera," by Peter Tolan; "Grunions," by Barbara Lindsay; "Brunch at Trudy and Paul's," by Michael Aschner; "Fellow Travellers," by Jeffrey Hatcher; and "The Artistic Direction," by Roger Hedden. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 4.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—If you like the old M-G-M musical, you probably won't like this stage version, which combines the earnest, wholesome values of the movie with an aesthetic of

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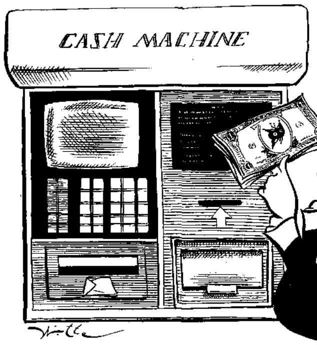
surpassing vulgarity. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie? (11/20/89) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

The Merchant of Venice—This production, directed by Peter Hall, tries a little too hard to avoid anti-Semitism (by making Christians look awful) and seems more interested in the quality of male bonding than that of mercy. As Shylock, Dustin Hoffman is dignified but ultimately ineffective. Fortunately, the production is about great ensemble Shakespeare rather than about Hoffman's Shylock, and it would be worth seeing if only for Michael Siberry (Gratiano) and Geraldine James (Portia). (1/1/90) (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

Moving Targets—The umbrella title for nine short plays by Joe Pintauro. With Anita Gillette. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 353-3874. Closes Feb. 18.)

Othello—This no-frills, no-nonsense production of Shakespeare's tragedy, staged by the eminent British director William Gaskill (late of the Royal Court Theatre), is a letdown. The acting is inadequate almost across the board. Oddly, what the evening chiefly lacks is "A Sense of Direction," which is the title of Gaskill's forthcoming memoir, a delightful account of his days at the Court, to be published this spring by Limelight Editions. You're better off staying home with the book. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 17.)



Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll—Eric Bogosian's new one-man show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Some Americans Abroad—A comedy by Richard Nelson, imported from London. The cast includes Bob Balaban, Kate Burton, Henderson Forsythe, and Elizabeth Shue. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler have the leads in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical. Susan H. Schulman was the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 25.)

Tru—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Zora Neale Hurston—A play by Laurence Holder, with Elizabeth Van Dyke as the author of the novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God." Directed by Wynn Handman. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes Feb. 25.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over *we know everything about all of them.* (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turns thirty this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this recently updated revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Brooke Adams. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots *from* "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. Whether Robbins' era—the fifties—was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LEND ME A TENOR:** The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . ***OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:*** *Jerry* Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 24.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling takes place in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

DANCE

HERE is some of what we heard at a recent seminar on dance photography, sponsored by the New York City Ballet Guild. The photographers, all well known for their shots of dancers in performance, were Fred Fehl, Costas, and Paul Kolnik; the moderator was Madeleine M. Nichols, the curator of the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center.

"Photography during the performance is the most difficult kind of dance photography. A second too soon or a second too late, it's bad." (Fehl)

"What we're really after is the moment when the dance is working on all levels—when the dancers are working in performance, with the musicians. You can see that relationship, even in a photograph. It's very difficult to find studio photography that has the intensity, energy, and focus of performance." (Kolnik)

"Not every dancer who is beautiful onstage is beautiful in a photograph. The camera sees only what the body looks like, the line. It doesn't see musicality or eloquence of movement." (Costas)

"It's a great help to you as a photographer if *you* are a little bit musical. You can anticipate the high point of a jump, for instance, or you can listen to the music and know what the dance is about to do." (Fehl)

"When you photograph, you have to take time pressing the shutter to get the pictures. So you have to black out your conscious mind and work subconsciously, so that your hand will go down *before* the moment you want to photograph." (Costas)

"As you photograph a dance, you create this flat, two-dimensional picture, this artifice. During a ballet, I'll do this perhaps seventy times; I'll take maybe seventy pictures. I'll say yes seventy times. But I'll also say no thousands of times." (Kolnik)

"In the fifty years I've worked, the light onstage has improved so much and the film has grown so sensitive that it's now very easy to take pictures." (Fehl)

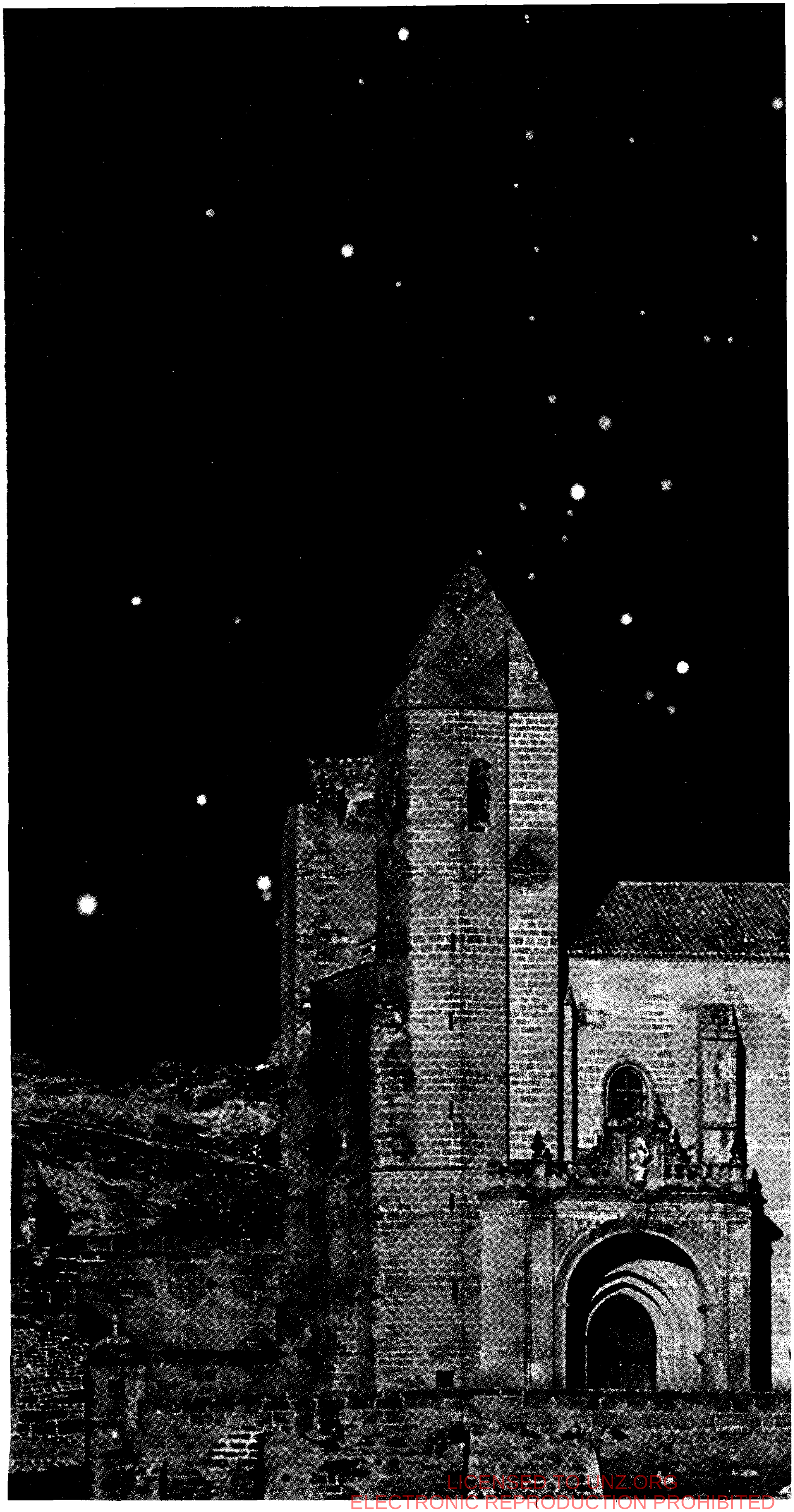
"We have lots of dancing on videotape. But a videotape has too much. What still photographers have got in this century is the *right* moment." (Nichols)

New York City Ballet—Feb. 13 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Moves," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 8: "Ballo della Regina," "Tarantella Pas de Deux," "Prague Symphony," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Moves," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Moves," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 1: "Fanfare," "Songs of the Auvergne," and "The Four Temperaments." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 7: "Swan Lake," "Prague Symphony," and "In G Major." . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Black & White," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through Feb. 25.)

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo—Final performances of the engagement. Feb. 13 and Feb. 15 at 8, and Feb. 17 at 2: "In Kazmidity," "Anarchic Heart," "Black Swan Pas de Deux," and "École de Ballet." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 and Feb. 16 at 8: Act II of "Giselle," "Le Corsaire Pas de Deux," "Pas de Quatre," "The Dying Swan," and "Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8, and Feb. 18 at 3: Act II of "Swan Lake," "Isadora Deconstructed," "Don Quixote Pas de Deux," "Go for Barocco," and "Gambol." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

José Greco—With his company of Spanish dancers, singers, and musicians. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 13-16 at 8, Feb. 17 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 18 at 2.)

David Dorfman Dance—In the première of "Careful Aim," and other works. A group led by Peter Zummo will provide musical accompaniment. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Feb. 15-18 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 674-8112.)



Heavenly Dreams

This Romanesque church is on the route to Compostela which literally means "Field of Stars."

Pilgrims have used these stars to help guide them to the tomb of the apostle St. James at Santiago de Compostela. Beginning in the 9th century, this remote corner of Galicia has been transformed into a place of pilgrimage for tens of thousands from all over the world.

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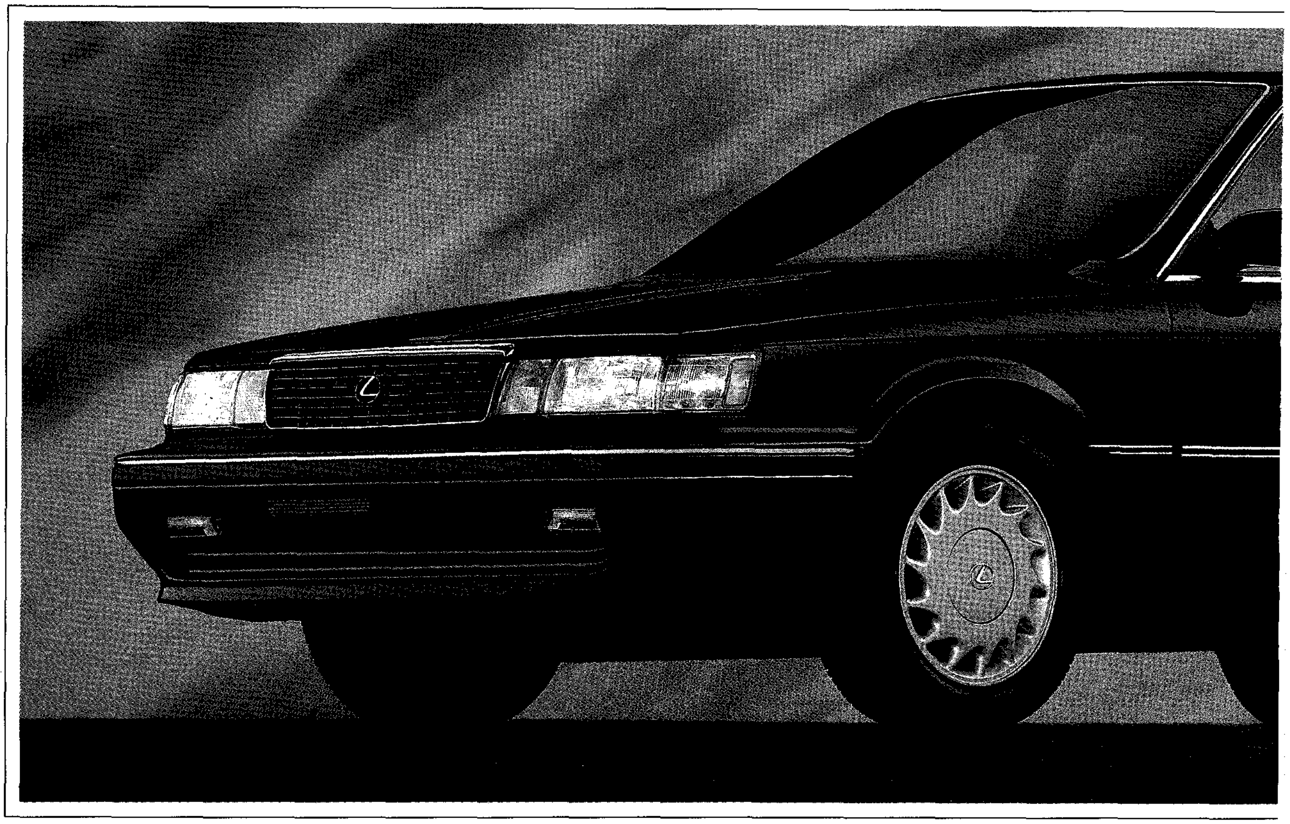
Spain...The Dream Never Ends

ESPAÑA

Everything Under the Sun



Introducing The Lexus ES 250. The Luxury Sedan Of Sports Sedans

Many a car buyer has moved up to a European sports sedan only to discover they've moved smack into minimalist theory. You know, the one that says *less* luxury is actually *more.*

Well at Lexus, we flatly reject that notion. And we've engineered the Lexus ES 250 with a level of standard features usually reserved for luxury sedans.

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probably one of the quietest places yo
ever sit. Unless, that is, you've crank
up the ES 250's six-speaker AM/F
cassette audio system.

This high-output audio desig
standard equipment. Yet it provide
level of high fidelity many other lux

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makers might consider optional. th the Lexus ES 250, the audiophile d opt only for the state-of-the-art npact Disc player.)

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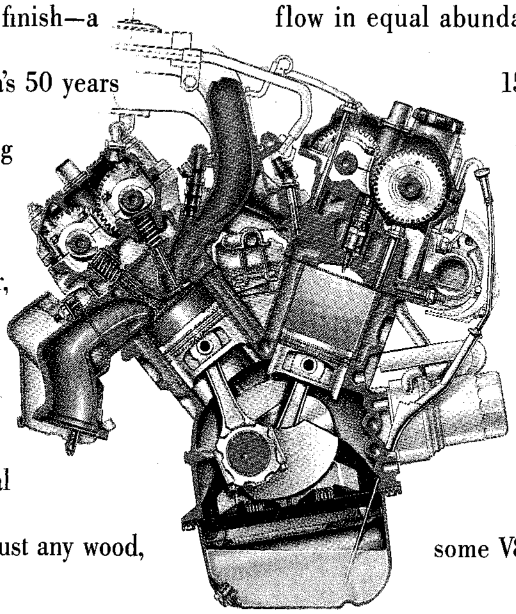
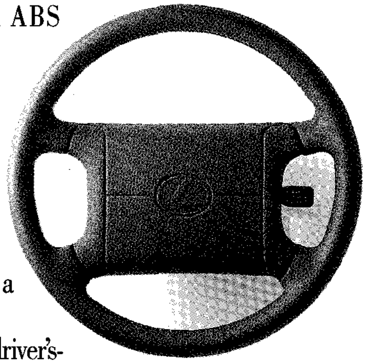
Its interior, example, avishly ap- nted with real d. And not just any wood, but richly textured bird's-eye maple.

Of course, these are luxuries you can savor without ever leaving the showroom. But get the ES 250 sedan out on the open road and its pleasures flow in equal abundance. Like the 156 horsepower that flows from the Lexus ES 250's Four-Cam, 24-valve V6 engine—power even some V8s can't match.



Or the responsiveness of the ES 250's handling—control that gives new meaning to the term "maneuverability."

You'll derive confidence from its standard ABS Anti-lock Brake System. And from a standard driver's-side airbag Supplemental Restraint System (SRS), shown above.



But then, steering clear of trouble is easy in an ES 250, thanks to its front-wheel drive, sports-tuned suspension and Goodyear Eagle GA radial tires—developed especially for Lexus. Again, it's all standard.

Steering clear of people who tell you less is more should be easier from now on, too.

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NIGHT LIFE

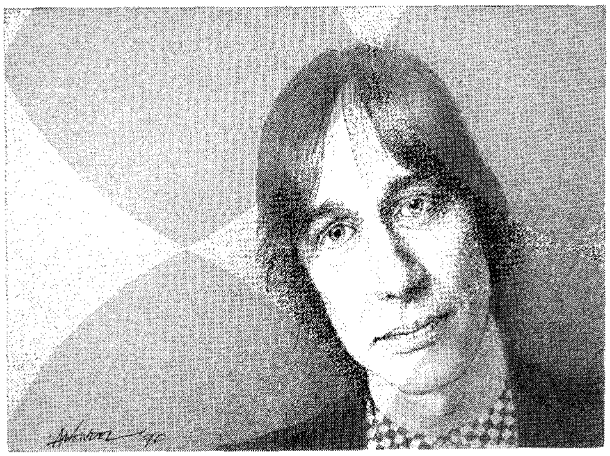
ROSEMARY CLOONEY fans have a fervor all their own. At the singer's opening-night performance at the Rainbow Room, several of them mouthed the words to every number, and many in the packed cabaret knew what song was coming shortly after the first note. And when Ms. Clooney cracked a joke—such as recounting the time she overheard her grandson saying he could imitate Grandma singing, whereupon he began "drinking water and mopping up the sweat"—her admirers couldn't contain themselves. This opening night, like most, started out with fevers running high, but even if it hadn't Ms. Clooney would have had no problem winning the audience's affection. She's not a showboater or a Streisand belter—a longtime smoker, she doesn't have the lungs for it. Rather, her approach is natural and understated: she has a warm, husky but clear voice, a world-weary cheerfulness, and a disarming sense of humor that bubbles up everywhere.

Ms. Clooney has, in effect, had two careers. The first began in the forties, when she and her sister Betty moved to New York and got jobs with Tony Pastor's band, and peaked in the early fifties, with her hit recordings for Columbia ("Come On-a My House" was the biggest) and her starring role in "White Christmas." After a long hiatus, she embarked on career No. 2 in the late seventies, when she signed on with Concord. Half of the fourteen records she has since made for the label are tribute albums, devoted to the likes of Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Cole Porter, and Irving Berlin. The most recent of these, which takes on Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein, is due out later this month, and Ms. Clooney's Rainbow Room show (she's appearing through February 24) focusses on her newest subjects. "I used to sing this song when I was twenty-five, and I thought I really understood it," she says in introducing "Little Girl Blue." "Now that I'm sixty-one, I realize I didn't know what I was talking about."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The newly refurbished Oak Room is currently home to **ANNE HAMPTON CALLAWAY,** a fine singer-pianist who can imitate Billie Holiday and Marlene Dietrich, sing an E-flat above high C, and say without sounding immodest, "People often come up to me and ask why I'm not famous." Apart from a few requisite supper-club numbers—when she played here a few years back, the audience requested "Memory" three times a night—Ms. Callaway's catalogue includes her own songs, songs by lesser-known New York composers, and songs improvised around suggestions made by musically inclined patrons. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur districts. **ANGELINA RÉAUX**—who has a rich, theatrical soprano and who, after breaking both legs during a "Sweeney Todd" performance a while back, told her doctors, "Don't cut this Tony-award-winning costume!"—is currently in residence here. In 1988, Ms. Réaux performed at the Public Theatre, where she dedicated a one-woman show to the music of Kurt Weill. The fine notices she received—she was even written up in a Kurt Weill newsletter—no doubt had Teresa Stratas looking over her shoulder. Ms. Réaux is once again singing Weill, along with music by Stephen Sondheim and Ricky Gordon. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine.



Todd Rundgren at the Ritz

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The twenty-four-year-old singer-songwriter **HUGH HARRIS,** who'll be performing here Feb. 13, recently released "Words for Our Years," a languorous funk début that's one part Prince, one part Terence Trent D'Arby, and (go figure) one part Elvis Costello. Feb. 14 belongs to John Gorka and **CHRISTINE LAVIN,** a funny, slightly twisted, and perennially lovelorn singer-guitarist, who'll no doubt have a few words to say about Valentine's Day. Singer-guitarist **KRIS KRISTOFFERSON,** who'll perform here Feb. 15, has been, among other things, a janitor at CBS Records, a bartender at Nashville's Tally-Ho Tavern, a helicopter pilot, a Rhodes Scholar, and a failed novelist. His acting and songwriting careers still call to mind a few old favorites—"A Star Is Born" and "Me and Bobby McGee," respectively—and his signature baritone still induces a little pooh-poohing and a whole lot of swooning. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—A pretty-in-pink West Indian restaurant found on one of New York's lesser-known jazz boulevards, Sixth Avenue. **LOU DONALDSON,** the alto saxophonist and singer, will be here with his quartet Feb. 13-18. Mr. Donaldson, who was raised on bebop and later strayed into funk, is known for his humorous streak—jokey rehashes are often part of his repertoire—but that doesn't mean he can't be serious, or soulful. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to the gravelly contralto **JULIE WILSON.** Ms. Wilson's new offering—in the past half-dozen years she has dedicated revues to famous and obscure chatter by Cole Porter, Stephen Sondheim, the Gershwins, and others—takes on the music of Cy Coleman, whose work can also be heard in "City of Angels," currently on Broadway. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.... ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, Frank Owens presides at the piano through Feb. 17; **RONNY WHYTE** starts up on Feb. 20. Music from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A snug, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. **AHMAD JAMAL,** a pianist known for his fierce, hurtling solos and his all-business rhythm sections, begins a two-week stint on Feb. 13. Music after ten.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—This low-ceilinged, below-stairs jazz room, its walls decorated with alternating bands of mirror and red plush, will seem intimate to some people and too intimate to tall people, who may want to remove their top hats before entering. **GEORGE COLEMAN,** the fiery tenor-sax man who came up in the Memphis of B. B. King et al., heads up a foursome for the next two weeks. Mondays remain in the hands of **LES PAUL,** the guitarist, guitar-builder, and overdubbing pioneer.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Chinese food served in a de-luxe greenhouse setting. Through the glass roof, which supports a jungle of potted greenery, you can admire the fruits of the midtown real-estate boom and, when available, the moon. A Steinway grand sits in the middle of the room, making things tricky for the waiters but improving the over-all quality of life. Feb. 13-18 it's occupied by **JOHN BUNCH,** a fine pianist who longs for the days when big bands roamed the earth and who has been known to work songs like "Alone Together" and "Can't We Be Friends" into his act. Performing with Mr. Bunch will be bassist **STEVE LA SPINA.** A trio led by **DICK SUDHALTER** starts up Feb. 20. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat where a bandleader was once heard saying, "I wanna introduce my drummer first on account of because he has to go put a quarter in the meter." The stage seats three or four comfortably, and for the next week or so it will be home to outfits led by pianist **MIKE RENZI** (Feb. 14); guitarist **JOHN PIZZARELLI** (Feb. 15); singer **JUDY BARNETT** (Feb. 16); guitarist **FRANK VIGNOLA** (Feb. 17); pianist Kent Raine (Feb. 18); and pianist Andy Tuck (Feb. 19). Vibraphonist Richard Greenblatt and pianist Dave Lalama step in on Feb. 20, followed by drummer Mike Clark and his trio on Feb. 21. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

KILIMANJARO, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—A recently opened, northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. There's a reggae double bill here Feb. 15-16: **DENNIS BROWN,** the Jamaican baritone whose vocal style has been compared to those of Ben E. King and Little Anthony; and **FREDDIE MC GREGOR,** the pop-soul crooner who, a few years back, scored a Jammy (Jamaican Music Industry Award) for Best Male Vocalist.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The p.-b. duos: **RUSS KASSOFF** and **LINC MILLIMAN** Feb. 13-17; **JOHN BUNCH** and **STEVE LA SPINA** beginning Feb. 20. Music from about nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **CURLEW,** an avant-garde rock, jazz, and what-have-you outfit led by the saxophonist George Cartwright, appears on Feb. 16. Also: drummer and composer **BOBBY PREVITE'S** Empty Suit on Feb. 13 and Feb. 20, and the Jazz Passengers on Feb. 17. Music after nine.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry-potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." **LEON RUSSELL** performs Feb. 17-18 (one show each night at nine-thirty). Over the course of a long career, Russell, whose mainstays are piano and guitar, has played or recorded with many a rock biggie: Phil Spector, Joe Cocker, Bob Dylan, George Harrison, the Rolling Stones. And that's only the short list. He shows up everywhere, from the Byrds' recording of Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" to Herb Alpert's "A Taste of Honey." Dining.

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place out of London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes, panelled ceiling—has more of a country-club feel. **Marilyn Maye,** a pop singer who had a pre-Liza hit with "Cabaret" and who is a personal favorite of Johnny's (she's been on "The Tonight Show" seventy-six times), is here through Feb. 17 (except Feb. 14). **Joan Rivers,** the woman who made the phrase "Can we talk?" a household expression, began doing standup here in 1988; she returns for a brief engagement Feb. 14-15, at ten-thirty. Aside from her daytime talk show, the comedienne recently tested the waters on Broadway, starring in Neil Simon's "Broadway Bound," but perhaps her biggest coup of late has been getting her own star on Hollywood Boulevard. On Monday nights, Woody Allen sometimes shows up to play celebrity clarinet with a New Orleans-style band. Music after nine-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret with rest-room attendants who ask, "Is the water too warm?" **Rosemary Clooney** performs at nine and eleven-fifteen, with a topnotch sextet, including **Scott Hamilton, Ken Peplowski,** and **Warren Vaché.** Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feed bag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. When the band is swinging, and you and your dreamboat are cheek to cheek, everything can seem just swell. "Another highball?" "Thanks ever so." **Vince Giordano,** the slick-haired bassist, crooner, and conductor, is here with his **Nighthawks** every Monday and Tuesday, running through Fletcher Henderson and Hoagy Carmichael and other vintage stuff. Also: Stan Rubin's Big Band on Feb. 14. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—A rock establishment where the customer is not always right. Singer-songwriter **Todd Rundgren,** who'll be performing here Feb. 16-17, began his solo career back in the eight-track days with a handful of cloying pop hits, some of which—"Hello, It's Me," "We Got to Get You a Woman"—you can still hear on the radio when you're looking for a *good* station. Today, he is a formidable cult figure, and rock journalists like him so much that they call him Todd. Rundgren has a considerable string of producer credits, and his last album—the punchy, white-soul offering "Nearly Human"—was one of his once-in-a-decade records that just about everyone agrees is exceptional. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and one of the city's most international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. **Linton Kwesi Johnson,** who performs here Feb. 20-21, with Dennis Bovell and the Dub Band, sets "dub poetry" to reggae. Mr. Johnson, who was born in Jamaica and lives in England, is more of a reciter than a singer, and he describes racial oppression and poverty in vivid detail. But this is also poetry you can dance to. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-3088)—Located on a Chelsea block that has become an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. **C. J. Chenier,** the son to whom zydeco king Clifton Chenier bequeathed his accordion and his **Red Hot Louisiana Band,** is in charge of things Feb. 16-24. Closed Sundays.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, salsa bands perform on Monday nights for their whistling, table-drumming fans. On Feb. 19, **Mongo Santamaria's** group shares the bill with the **Pancho Sanchez** orchestra; tenor saxophonist **Stanley Turrentine** is the guest soloist. **Max Roach,** a drummer with an uncanny ability to move with, or stay ahead of, the times—he was a seminal force in bop and hard bop, and in the eighties took up with a few rappers—brings in his quartet Feb. 16-18. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

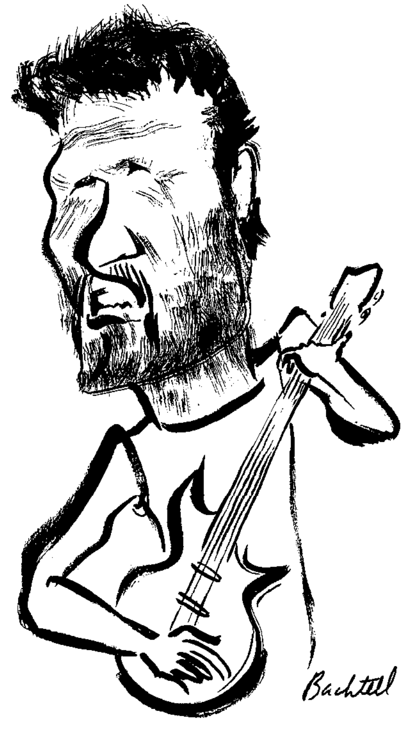
Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. Although the décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia, the music is anything but stale. The princely **Buck Clayton**—whose arrangements and compositions call to mind those of Count Basie, for whom he was a star trumpeter in the thirties and forties—leads a big band here Feb. 13-18. Mondays are reserved for a big band formerly headed by the late drumming legend **Mel Lewis.** Music after ten.

West End, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (662-8830)—This café—for years a well-known haven for those studying pinball, jazz, and other unofficial Columbia University requirements—reopened last month. Pianist **Junior Mance** leads a quartet here Feb. 15-18.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled between brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. Pianist and former ballpark organist **Jane Jarvis**—"Most people at the Mets games didn't know I was playing jazz on the organ at Shea Stadium"—plays with bassist **Frank Tate** through Feb. 17. A piano-bass team consisting of **John Hicks** and **Santi Debriano** starts up on Feb. 19. Music from eight weeknights and Sundays from seven.

AIR FRESHENERS

Few cities are noted for their bouquet. Baltimore is made pungent by spice factories; and Rome is scented by outdoor wood fires despite municipal prohibitions. But, in general, when you are in a big city and you anticipate a smell coming on, you do your best to block it out before it arrives in full force—you expect the worst. New York, at least in winter (when the smell off the streets is subdued by the cold), may have changed that, for the air has been sweetened by the aroma of honey-roasted peanuts. The venders, with their deep-bellied copper pans and hidden heat sources, churn together a mixture of peanuts and sugary sauce that produces a wonderful smell. Not since the yam sellers of the first half of the century has a group of venders so enriched the air we breathe.



Kris Kristofferson at the Bottom Line

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE statue of the kneeling woman at the entrance to the men's room in Radio City Music Hall suddenly looked as if she were lifting her draped fabric to shroud the plastic cups and ashtrays that now surrounded her. Chubby teens with almost as much mousse as gum screamed from the balcony to their girlfriends on the grand staircase and threw Raisinets at each other. The great stage was framed by ropes of tacky Japanese lanterns. Fans of "Radio Days" might be horrified, but B-52's fans are always delighted to find that no matter how successful their favorite group becomes, everywhere they play turns into a garage party.

Some opening act accounted for the Palladium-at-its-peak parade through the lobby. But the rush for seating during intermission was merely a momentary thing, simply a matter of positioning, because at the first crash of "Cosmic Thing" the audience jumped up to meet Fred's familiar, droning hello, Cindy's frugging, and Kate's shimmy, and then they hopped, bopped, jerked, and shook as long as the 2's were on (with time-out for occasional squats on an armrest). The usherettes on our side didn't get it at first. "Why don't they sit down?" said one with flat shoes and a sensible demeanor. "Aren't you tired?" she asked the guy who kept dodging her attempts to stop him from dancing in the aisle. A half hour later he caught her shaking to "Whammy" by the light booth. The six thousand screams that met the 2's climax of "Love Shack" would have drowned out the speakers at Mars. Aisle standers wiped their sweat-soaked faces with their shirts to gear up for "Rock Lobster."

After an hour and a half, you wouldn't have been able to find anyone in the hall who could have signed an affidavit saying they'd sat for more than five minutes. "Great, huh?" said the dancing guy to the usherette as he was leaving. "But you guys should take all these chairs out. Who needs 'em?" The usherette shuddered. "Sorry," the guy quickly added. "It was just a thought."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Watchface—Their latest work, "White," is about bigotry. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 15-17 at 8, and Feb. 18 at 3. Through Feb. 25.)

"New Works, First Runs"—A program of short videotapes: "Blind Country," by Erika Beckman; "OnOurOwn," by Joe Gibbons, with Tony Oursler; "DiAna's Hair Ego: AIDS Info Up Front," by Ellen Spiro; "He Was Once," by Mary Hestand; and "Desire, Inc.," by Lynn Hershman. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 6.)

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ART

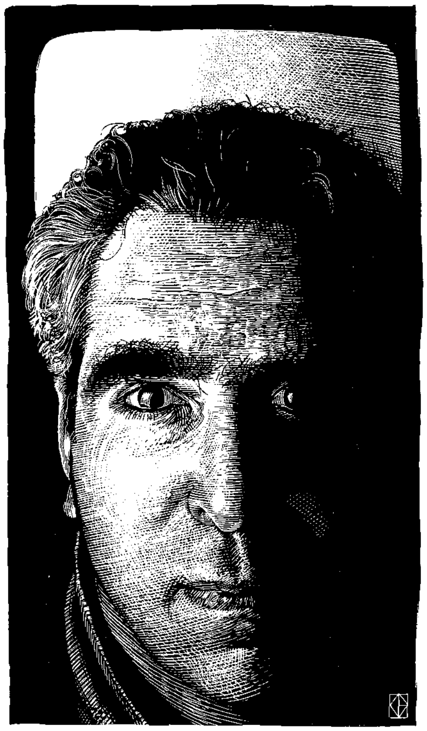
THE leitmotiv in Gary Stephan's paintings over the past couple of years has been a shape that most characteristically resembles dark eyeglasses—the kind of shades that a blind man might wear. This form is actually based on a template Stephan made from the shape of a pair of glasses at a time when he was having serious trouble with his eyesight. How sad, you might think: a painter who nearly lost his vision and whose work is now gripped by a fear of blindness. Not quite. Stephan's eyes are fine these days; his use of the template is anything but literal, and the pictorial progress of this ocular shape is increasingly picaresque.

Stephan has always been a methodical painter. He establishes a private, formal theme (in the early eighties it was a rectilinear, abstracted "figure"), then puts it through any number of logical moves and variations until it is exhausted and he is ready to go on to something else. The double-lens template, for instance, first appeared in a straightforward manner but has by now taken on many different guises, performing many different narrative roles. In Stephan's grand new show (at Mary Boone, through February 24) it appears in its fundamental form but also as linear riffs that resemble unfurling ribbons, sheriff's badges, dumbbells, and telephones. It graces the mantel of "Interior with Mantel," suggesting blind mice or bibelots. It sits atop the lintels in "Interior with Window" and "Interior with Door," then doubles over and bends backward to evoke celestial orbs and cumulus clouds. In several small landscapes, a single lens is perspectively rendered and dramatically cast with a poignance that conjures an extraterrestrial interloper or a knight-errant. What better emblem for the artist-seeker than his specs?

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Gold of Africa: The Barbier-Mueller Collection." This cohesive show, assembled from a Swiss collection, demonstrates that the world's most fanciful gold rings come from Ghana, just as the largest and most sumptuous gold earrings are those from Mali. There are staggering amounts of gold here, including a pair of human jawbones cast in the metal. Through March 11. . . . ¶ The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection contains some important Matisses, some fine Picassos and Giacomettis, and a dynamite Vlaminck, but the selection here offers neither an illuminating historical view nor an in-depth understanding of a significant moment (little Expressionism, no Dada, no Futurism). Through April 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

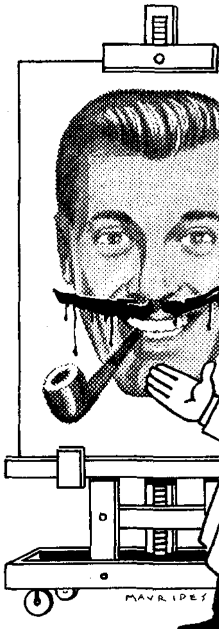
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of works by Robert Moskowitz that includes window-shade collages from the early sixties, monochrome paintings from the early seventies, and more recent, large-scale paintings and pastels. Through May 1. . . . ¶ In Vernon Fisher's newest installation—a complicated amalgam of wall drawings, paintings, texts, surveyor's equipment, a mirror, a sliced wall, and an anamorphic projection of a Dalmatian—the Texas artist wittily and poetically examines the breakdown of theory by pitting systems of representation and thought against each other. Through March 6. . . . ¶ Photographs by Tina Barney. Through April 10. . . . ¶ "Photography Until Now" will open Feb. 18. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)



Photographer Peter Campus

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Jenny Holzer illumines Mr. Wright's daunting space with her aphorisms, which are engraved on both red and white granite benches and displayed on a five-hundred-and-thirty-five-foot electronic message unit that follows the contours of the museum's spiralling wall. Through Feb. 25. (Another of Holzer's installation works, "Laments," can be seen at Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St.) (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The premise of "Image World: Art and Media Culture"—"that the overpowering presence of the media has produced an 'image world' "—is about as sprightly as the Oldest Living Confederate Widow could expect to be. Nevertheless, many individual pieces, such as the lobby "Ticket Booth," by Dennis Adams, which puts the Whitney's ticket-taking docents in a "homeless" frieze, are terrific. Through Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)



"SubGenius" artist Paul Mavrides

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Blue of Jingtai," a display of thirty-five Chinese cloisonné vessels, mostly from the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912). Nineteen-twelve is also the year these pieces entered the museum's collection. . . . ¶ A show of fifty paintings, prints, and drawings by American artists who were affiliated with Alfred Stieglitz and his Gallery 291: Marsden Hartley, Arthur G. Dove, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Abraham Walkowitz, and Max Weber. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Even though the Japanese lifted their ceramics techniques from the Chinese, they nevertheless went on to produce some of the finest such objects known. "The Japanese Influence on American Ceramics" proves that we're still working on it. There are some wonderful objects here that emulate a Japanese shape, sense of color, or surface while retaining their own identity—a Fulper vase, a Ron Nagle pot, and a Betty Woodman basket, for example. But the vast majority of work in the show is pure kitsch and nothing in the face of the real McCoy, which is occasionally exhibited alongside. Through March 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"The Art of Thomas Rowlandson" (1756-1827) includes eighty-four watercolors and drawings by the English satirist. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Nineteen paintings and twenty-three samurai swords and daggers constitute a show that demonstrates the relationship between the courtly brush and the martial blade in medieval Japan. Through April 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's hundred-and-sixty-fifth annual exhibition is a juried show that includes work in all mediums. Through March 7. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Mary Kelly's installation on sexual politics contains, among other pieces, a history of the women's movement since 1968 presented on eight plates of stainless steel. Starts Feb. 16. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Spring training for non-players in a show called "Diamonds Are Forever," which offers the reflections of contemporary authors and artists on that most American of pastimes: baseball. The parks, players, equipment, and action are all immortalized, by fans such as Claes Oldenburg, Edna Ferber, Nicholas Nixon, Roger Angell, and Andy Warhol. Starts Feb. 17. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Thursdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—At the "New British Painting" exhibition, viewers may get the feeling that they have gone back to a future of Dickensian woes, or of Depression-era specialties such as Expressionistic satire, Magic Realism, and Socialist allegory. Ken Currie's "Workshop of the World (Hope and Optimism in Spite of Present Difficulties)" and "In the City Bar" positively erupt with the spirit of nineteen-thirties radical unionism. And Stephen Conroy's neo-Victorian, workaday visions of tight-lipped, buttoned-up young men in close, seemingly gaslit interiors evoke Walter Sickert, as well as Degas in his most sombre, Zola-conscious moments. Through March 18. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A show of contemporary sub-Saharan African art that should inspire serious rethinking of such issues as cultural imperialism and the function of art within a society. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Joan Snyder—New paintings big and small, most with velvet, many with nails, dowels,

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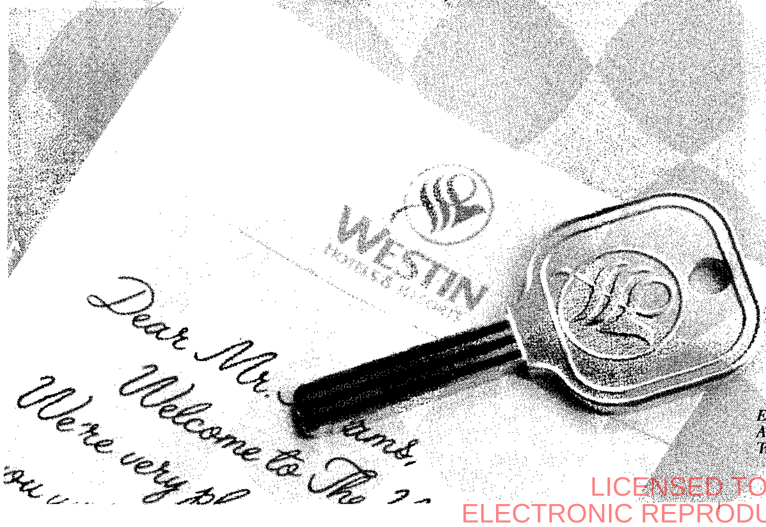

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sticks, pipes, clamps, or wire. In these unabashedly emotional compositions, the artist alludes to totems, masks, cruciforms, moons, oceans, and figures in extremis, and she aspires to such exalted elegiac forms as requiems and cantatas. There is excessive sincerity at work here—a problem for some, perhaps, and not for others—but the opulent physicality of these paintings luckily distracts us from the wet humanism we are meant to share. Several of these works are really quite gorgeous. Through Feb. 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Open Mondays.)

Group Shows—At the **colnaghi,** 21 E. 67th St.: An assortment of high-quality and mostly low-interest Old Master paintings from the fourteenth century through the eighteenth. There's a nice Boucher "Venus and Cupid," a theatrical "Mediterranean Harbor Scene," by Hendrik Van Minderhout (1623-96), and a rather sinister, pagan-looking "St. Bartholomew" by Bernardo Cavallino (1616-56). Through Feb. 16. (Open Mondays; closes at 4 on Saturdays.) . . . **shepherd,** 21 E. 84th St.: All of this gallery's exhibitions have something to offer the seriously eclectic browser or nineteenth-century amateur—the setting alone prompts symbolist reveries. But the current show of works on paper from the late eighteenth century through the early twentieth is, relatively speaking, on the dry side. Still, "Death and the Girl," by Louis Legrand, is fun; the cat studies by Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen are, as always, wonderful; and a sweet, tiny landscape of the Roman Campagna by Edward Lear was, it would appear, once mailed to someone as a homemade get-well card. Through Feb. 27.

Short List—**james grashow,** Stone, 48 E. 86th St. (through March 2); **bob thompson,** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Feb. 24).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

John Alexander—Expressionism, American-style. The show consists mostly of predictable landscape paintings of decadent swamps with a moon-bathed light and a voodoo atmosphere. The handful of landscapes with figures in them, such as "Hesitant Bride on the Verge of Dunking Her Monkey," are better. Best of all are the few pieces of social satire, particularly the artist's updating of "American Gothic," with Ivana and Donald surrounded by opulent Victorian furnishings in garish golden fluorescence. She looks like her body's on crooked; he looks like he just sucked a lemon. Through Feb. 24. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Roy De Forest—New paintings, drawings, and painted sculptures by a king of Northern California funk. De Forest is a great humorist, and each of his characters is as busy as a one-man band. He can turn two dabs of paint into a pair of beady eyes. Through Feb. 28. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Stewart Hitch—Just when you thought this mid-career painter was going to make it to a ripe age by painting the same old tooth shapes, he's switched. In his new works fields of floating squares and small circles adeptly activate the canvases, and the bright colors are cheery and light-filled. But somehow, when one considers composition and color together, the paintings appear both naive and cynical. Through Feb. 24. (Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Gerhard Richter—In this artist's work the distinction between "objective" and "nonobjective" painting becomes the fool's conundrum it was always meant to be. For a long time now, Richter has alternately produced Photo-Realist works that look painterly and gestural abstractions that look photochemical. This paradox is carried to the breaking point in two shows of Richter's new work. Uptown there is one realist image (an old church courtyard) and several grisaille abstractions that—with brilliant painterly detail and movement—suggest some ultimate geological winter: a world frozen stiff. The downtown show, however, suggests a burgeoning. There are two of Richter's familiar realist subjects (a landscape and a still-life), but they are overwhelmed by a group of large, complex abstractions whose spectacular chromatic progressions and layers of peeling and puckering painted "skins" seem to proclaim springtime for painting qua painting. Through Feb. 24. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St., open Mondays; and Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

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Andy Warhol (1930-87)—Self-portraits in various mediums. There is only one really good painting here, the black "Camouflage Self-Portrait," seen last year at MOMA, and it's not for sale. The rest of the exhibition consists mainly of odds and ends—paintings, photo-booth strips, upgraded erstwhile give-aways—whose prices suggest a thriving industry. Through March 1. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St.) . . . ¶ A complementary show is at Alexander, 476 Broome St.

Robert Zakanitch—The newest paintings by this victim of the marketplace are a disappointment. Now Zakanitch is setting his flower patterns into landscapes and into baroque, illusionistic architectural paintings that recall postcards and doilied decorative plates. He can still paint circles around most Expressionists—for instance, he creates the most luscious leaves imaginable. If he could figure out the what as well as the how, he would be a formidable artist. Through Feb. 24. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"The Narrative in Art"—A display of drawings and prints, mostly by German Expressionists but also including some fine Munchs, and an incisive group of drawings by George Grosz from the nineteen-twenties. Through March 11. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**abe ajay,** Deutsch, 29 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 28); **alexander archipenko,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 17); **martha diamond,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 3); **sondra freckelton,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 14); **terence la noue,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 3); **peter loftus** and **lois dodd,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 28); **giorgio morandi,** Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 10); **irving petlin,** Kent, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 24).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Nassos Daphnis / Robert Therrien—In "Thirty Years with Leo Castelli" Daphnis never wavers from his bold, bright, geometric route, and indeed all the paintings and structures here look energetic and good. / As he tries different formats, Therrien's work gets weirder. In this rear-gallery show of recent pieces, there's a big chrome-yellow wall relief that includes a shape like an abstract mustache; a metal sculpture resembling an elongated waste bucket that is painted white on the outside; and an irregular steel wall grid that has the disorienting effect of a willfully loose handshake. Through Feb. 24. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Félix González-Torres—The Andrea Rosen gallery's inaugural exhibition is of work by an artist who produces spare, clean, Judd-like shapes by means of stacked sheets suggesting giant Xerox paper. Some bare messages can be peeled off by viewers page by page. This is cool, information-age minimalism, but González-Torres has been getting hot. Through Feb. 24. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Peter Halley—A show of small "Kodaliths" made between 1983 and 1988 that provides an interesting coda to Halley's brilliant December show of big paintings, at Sonnabend. The prints are as saturated with black as the paintings were with color. Halley relentlessly maintains that his work has to do with computer-age epistemology—here, phrases relating to highways and terminal screens take the place of circuitry-patterned geometry—but what's great about it is its intense and aggressive pictorial rigor. If the paintings proposed Halley's formal kinship with Judd and Stella, the Kodaliths suggest the precedents of Serra and Ruscha. Through Feb. 24. (303 Gallery, 127 Spring St.)

Magdalena Jetelová—This Czech artist freshly portrays the ephemerality of art with her two room-size sculptures. The more straightforward one consists of a photograph of an inverted triangle, a dirt-covered triangular wall propped against a nearby corner, and a laser beam, which is programmed to travel up the photograph and creep across the wall, going from the photographic form to the sculptural one. Through Feb. 24. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Guillermo Kuitca—A compelling début by a young Argentinian. The show includes three robust padded-vinyl paintings of part of a German road map and more traditional canvases of floor plans and angled cutaway views of exitless apartments, most rendered in Jasper Johns gray. Some have details—such as clear teardrops or crude hangmen—that dangle like crystals from a dusty chandelier; all the work is moody, modest, and mysterious. Through Feb. 24. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Donald Lipski—Sealed sentiment by the wittiest artist around, in the form of a surrealistic bud vase—a chain of roses laid bud to stem in two glass tubes filled with water that cut across the floor and up the wall of a dramatic skylighted room. Through Feb. 24. (Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway.)

Vik Muniz—This object maker occasionally slips into neo-conceptual conceits and one-liners, but many of his new works are moody and somewhat zany; they look like displays in some twisted private museum. The more enigmatic pieces include a marble cinder block propped up by a cement one, and a photograph of a sofa mounted low on the wall and supported by actual furniture legs. Through Feb. 24. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

Joel Otterson—An often marvellous artist who sometimes gets carried away with pure shtick. In a new show, for instance, the pièce de résistance is a big, automatized, rocking and folding Craftmatic bed with a disco sound system for a headboard, and a canopy and coverlet made of hideous, vaguely funereal, glitzy fabric. It's startling and kind of great for a second, then creepy and sad, and finally very conflicted in its implicit messages. There's another, more focussed piece with AIDSian connotations: a group of rococo chairs embroidered with the words "Cura Te Ipsum" and flanked by baskets of healthful fruit. Also in the show is a monstrous table of polished, burled wood that might be a terrible but not unfunny pun on George Nakashima's organic style of crafted furniture. Through March 3. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Giulio Paolini—Hardly the artist's most sumptuous work, but it communicates efficiently his role as magician. In a cycle of drawings and slide projections, sight lines radiate from the eyes of a figure, lifted from an eighteenth-century etching, to rectangles drawn in space. The whole is a touching, if somewhat detached, portrait of melancholy. Through Feb. 24. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St.)

Beverly Pepper—Almost all of these slapdash paintings from "The Odyssey Series" feature the same winding, whiplash path with a few pillow-shaped pools on it, surrounded by ice-blue water or sky. Through Feb. 24. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

David Rabinowitch—A sculpture titled "Open Wood Construction (Poplar)," built three months ago by Tadashi Hashimoto, from plans drawn by the artist in 1966. Through Feb. 28. (Flynn, 113 Crosby St.)

Erika Rothenberg—This artist's beat is political critique and her style is both ironic and tonic. Her new exhibition, titled "America, the Perfect Country," includes a miniature-golf-style putting green with an only-in-America message, and several brightly painted works sporting statistics such as "72.9% of Americans expect to go to heaven" or advertising "Altruism Perfume." Among assorted "Freedom of Expression Products" is a flag-burning kit (folded flag plus Bic lighter, boxed) like the one recently on view in a New Museum window display that was vandalized. Through Feb. 17. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Salvatore Scarpitta—Work spanning three decades, by an artist who has consistently brought the intense energy and muscularity of Abstract Expressionism to sculptural objects. Some consist of heavy, construction-weight canvas wrapped tautly around rectangular framing devices; they have the feverish intensity of tourniquets applied on the battlefield. The standing and propped sleds on display are vehicles for the imagination and suggest a means of salvation. All the works have a larger-than-life energy yet are highly controlled. Through Feb. 24. (Hanson, 415 West Broadway.)

Alan Turner—"Pin the nose on the lady" seems to be the bizarre game in these deadpan, slightly repulsive canvases of women with lips where their ears should be, nicely painted in dry fresco colors. Through Feb. 24. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

David von Schlegell—Paintings, by a sculptor, that resemble photographs in faded monochrome colors. There is no gesture or image, and little point to any of them. Through Feb. 28. (Viafora, 568 Broadway.)

Robert Yarber—This artist has spent more than a decade depicting figures falling through the air as if they had just jumped out of skyscraper windows, and for much of that time the recurring motif has seemed redundant. But such paintings are now so lush and seductive, who cares? Yarber portrays sparkly "Million Dollar Movie" city light and its reflection on the water like no one else. In today's Europhilic art scene he is perhaps the sole champion of the American regionalist spirit, but in one painting he even lets his brush run loose, as if he were an abstractionist. In three paintings of interior scenes—which are less assured—he is working toward the kind of penetration of deep, dark space mastered by Tintoretto. Through Feb. 24. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

"Storyline"—An exemplary show of narrative paintings, with an unexpected range of peculiar and provocative juxtaposition. It includes Neil Jenney's "Fish and Pole" (1969), which is a funny portrait of a battle with no survivors, Jan Müller's "The Search for the Unicorn" (1957), and Mark Tansey's "Homage to Susan Sontag" (1982), which is quite simply a brilliant iconographic puzzle. Through March 3. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Short List—**JAMES CASEBERE** and **SHENGÉ KA PHARAOH,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through March 10); **SONIA DELAUNAY,** Zarre, 379 West Broadway (through Feb. 28); **DON EDDY,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through Feb. 28); **SUZAN ETKIN,** Audiello, 142 Greene St. (through March 10); **PETER HUTCHINSON,** Gibson, 568 Broadway (through March 10); **GARY KUEHN,** Roeder, 545 Broadway (closed Tuesdays, through Feb. 28); **LEONCILLO,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through March 10); **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG,** Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway (through March 3); **T. L. SOLIEN,** Walls, 137 Greene St. (through March 3); **GARY STEPHAN,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Feb. 24); **RICHARD TUTTLE,** Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Feb. 28); **CHARMION VON WIEGAND,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through March 14); **ALLAN WEXLER,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through March 10); **TROELS WÖRSEL,** Nolan, 560 Broadway (through March 3).

OTHER GALLERIES

Alan Saret—A major retrospective of work in several mediums by Saret—surely one of the strangest artists alive—best known for his ethereal, hanging "pubic" sculptures made of wire mesh. His earlier, figurative drawings confirm suspicions that the artist is at heart a "Dionysus in '69" type, while his often enchanting new wall and floor sculptures make wonderfully poetic use of more recently developed mesh-fencing materials. Through March 11. (P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

"SubGenius"—A collection of illustrations, most by Paul Mavrides and John Hagen-Brenner, that were used in publications of the Church of the SubGenius, a loose-knit, cultish organization of artists, writers, and just plain followers. Through April 10. (Psychedelic Solution Gallery, 33 W. 8th St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 8.)

"Video Spin-Offs"—Installations by three artists who influenced the better-known Nam June Paik—who curated the show—and by the videomaster himself. Paul Garrin's installation is meant to hit you over the head with its fierceness, and it does. It consists of angry, politically correct slogans scrawled on the gallery's walls and, behind a razor-wire fence, a videotape of a hefty, hungry-looking German shepherd gnawing on a large bone; as one approaches the fence, the dog growls viciously. On the wall behind the monitor is an annoyingly obvious canvas of an uptown cocktail party with a scene of riot police in action revealed through a window. The best of the Nam June Paik works is the smallest: a large frog tchotchke contemplating a videotape of frogs in their ostensibly natural habitat—a wonderfully succinct reversal of the notion of the observer and the observed. Betsy Connors offers some sophomoric, dollhouse-size models of rooms with monitors in them, and Marianne Heske has some large, showy, and awful computer-generated abstract paintings. Through Feb. 25. (The Clocktower 108 Leonard St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sunday.)

Small Works Show—This annual competition, where in the past you could see little, often cutesy versions of everything imaginable, is light on lightness this year, and heavy on collage and Cornell. If there are discoveries to be made here, the jumbled presentation prevents your making them. The show does, however, provide a chance to see a selection of work by two hundred and sixty-seven young artists, as "edited" by the art supermarketer Ivan Karp. All in all, it's the closest the legitimate art world gets to the Greenwich Village sidewalk exposition. Through March 9. (80 Washington Square East Galleries, New York University.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Adam Fuss show at Robert Miller is so simple and visually stimulating that it's a perceptual pleasure. At first, seeing the pictures is like being in a dark room at the moment the blinds are opened onto a bright day. After a while, when the shock of the light subsides, the pictures become rather meditative, not unlike Tantric art. At the center of each photograph is a circular form of white light, with an intensity harsh enough to affect one's eyes. The rest of the surface is where the pictorial gravy comes in—the white circles are surrounded by concentric rings, soaked in colors that sometimes progress by gradation and other times change into completely new colors. Concentration brings out the beauty in these pieces; scanning them won't offer any rewards. There's an experimental tone here, reminiscent of Josef Albers' color exercises, Man Ray's explorations of light, and, more generically, spirographs, as well as early scientific drawings of the planets. Fuss, who has been doing strong abstract photography for a few years now, is flying high with this show. He's really going for the essence of photography—light. The question is, will he be able to maintain the modesty of these pictures, which is what makes them work, or will he pull an Icarus?

Bernd and Hilla Becher—Sixty-four exquisitely printed black-and-white photographs taken over the past twenty-five years. The images are of familiar-looking exposed industrial structures—gas tanks, grain elevators, water towers—and there is a particularly compelling group of fifteen "Blast Furnaces." Through June 22. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

"The Indomitable Spirit"—Most of the ninety-four artists represented have created works specifically for this show—a photographic response to AIDS. Among the contributors are John Baldessari, Cindy Sherman, Louise Lawler, and Andres Serrano. Through April 7. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**PETER CAMPUS,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Feb. 24); **ADAM FUSS,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 3); **PETER HUJAR,** Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. (opens at 1 on Saturdays, through Feb. 24); **HENRY PEACH ROBINSON** and **DOUGLAS KIRKLAND,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Sundays, through Feb. 25).

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MUSIC

THERE are a few artists in the musical world who can be more or less counted on to deliver a memorable, enriching concert, and then there are many who are less predictable, even erratic, but who come up with the goods on occasion. For example, on Wednesday, February 14, the uneven but still promising collection of old-instrument musicians known as the Classical Band plays Beethoven at Carnegie Hall under a guest conductor, Bruno Weil. At the same hall, on Saturday, the soprano Elisabeth Söderström, who always pours her heart into every song and whose voice sometimes goes along and sometimes doesn't, sings Mahler's "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" songs with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Next Monday, at *Merkin Concert Hall*, Robert Taub (whom we have heard sound like both a neatly cut-out modernist and a visionary virtuoso) plays Babbitt's latest piano piece and Beethoven's last piano sonata, among other music. The following evening at Carnegie Hall, Klaus Tennstedt, whose best Mahler is deeply stirring, leads the Philadelphia Orchestra in the Sixth Symphony. Then, on Wednesday, Daniel Barenboim, who sometimes sounds like a genuine throwback to spacious Germanic interpretation and other times seems sloppy and overrated, ventures into territory we don't recall hearing him try, Bach's Goldberg Variations. (The recital is at Avery Fisher Hall.) Christoph von Dohnányi can be dour and kapellmeisterish, or he can be searching, incisive, penetrating; he plays Mahler, Schoenberg, Schubert, and Mozart with the Cleveland Orchestra next Thursday, at Carnegie Hall.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**IL TROVATORE,** with Susan Dunn, Dolora Zajick, Ermanno Mauro, and Lajos Miller; conducted by Rico Saccani. (Feb. 12 and Feb. 15, when Ludmilla Schemtchuk sings the role of Azucena, at 8.) . . . **FAUST,** a new production, with Carol Vaness, Neil Shicoff, Brian Schexnayder, and James Morris; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 13 and Feb. 16 at 8.) . . . **SAMSON ET DALILA,** with Shirley Verrett, Placido Domingo, Alain Fondary, Michael Devlin, and John Macurdy; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 14 at 8, Feb. 17 at 1:30, and Feb. 21 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with June Anderson, Luciano Pavarotti, Leo Nucci, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; Marcello Panni. (Feb. 17 and Feb. 20 at 8.) . . . **MANON LESCAUT,** with Mirella Freni, Peter Dvorsky, J. Patrick Raftery, and Italo Tajo; Nello Santi. (Feb. 19 at 8.)

AMERICAN CHAMBER OPERA COMPANY—Presenting "Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth," by Jack Beeson and Sheldon Harnick, and the première of "Peronelle," by Larry Lipkis and Barry Spacks. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Feb. 16-17 at 8. *Through Feb. 24. For information about tickets, call 781-0857.*)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, Erich Leinsdorf conducting. Feb. 13 at 8: Symphonies by Haydn and Bruckner. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 8, Feb. 16 at 2, Feb. 17 at 8, and Feb. 20 at 8: Works by Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Virgil Thomson, and Tchaikovsky. With Yefim Bronfman, piano.

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—At Carnegie Hall. Feb. 12 at 8: Riccardo Muti conducting works by Pergolesi and Cherubini. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 8: Klaus Tennstedt conducting Mahler's Sixth Symphony.

THE CLASSICAL BAND—Bruno Weil *conducting an all-*Beethoven program. With Melvyn Tan, fortepiano. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 14 at 8.)

"MEET THE MODERNS"—Lukas Foss conducting the Brooklyn Philharmonic in a program of works by Louise Talma, Alvin Singleton, Bernadette Speach, and others. With Ursula Oppens, piano, and members of Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Feb. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

NEW YORK POPS—Skitch Henderson conducting a program of works by British pop and jazz composers. With George Shearing at the bench. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 16 at 8 and Feb. 17 at 2.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—Julius Rudel conducting the music of Rossini, Haydn, and Mahler. With Elisabeth Söderström, soprano, and William Stone, baritone. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 17 at 8.)

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA—Nicholas McGegan conducting works by Vivaldi, Rameau, and Handel. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 18 at 7:30.)

CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA—Christoph von Dohnányi conducting. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 22 at 8.)

JUILLIARD CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Otto-Werner Mueller conducting a Mozart-Beethoven program. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

MANHATTAN PHILHARMONIA—David Gilbert conducting works by Prokofiev and others. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 16 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Bruno Weil conducting. With Paul Tortelier, cello. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 17 at 8 and Feb. 18 at 3.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY—Jens Nygaard conducting. With soloists Frank Almond, violin, and William Sharp, baritone. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 19 at 8.)

MUSICA SACRA CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA—Richard Westenburg conducting an all-Brubeck evening. With Jennifer Lane, soprano; Mark Bleeke, tenor; Kevin Deas, bass; and the Dave Brubeck quartet. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

BROWN UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS—Paul Phillips and Bill Ermey conducting a benefit performance. With the Dave Brubeck quartet. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 18 at 3.)

VERDI'S "REQUIEM"—John Litton conducting. The soloists will be Gale Limansky, soprano; Gwendolyn Jones, mezzo-soprano; Charles Walker, tenor; and Richard Crist, bass-baritone. With the St. Bartholomew's Choir and William Trafka, organ. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

RECITALS

RUTH LAREDO—Piano, in a concert-lecture devoted to Schumann's music. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 13 at 8.)

JEFFREY SIEGEL—Piano, in a program of music and commentary also devoted to the works of Robert and Clara Schumann. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 14 at 8.)

SPECULUM MUSICAE—Playing works by Brian Ferneyhough, Peter Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, and Gerald Barry. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 14 at 8.)

MELVYN TAN—Fortepiano. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Feb. 15 at 5:45.)

MISHA DICHTER—Piano, performing sonatas by Beethoven and Schubert. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 15 at 8.)

EMERSON STRING QUARTET—In a program of works by Beethoven and Schubert. With Bernard Greenhouse, cello. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Jean-Pierre Rampal

HÉLÈNE WICKETT—Piano. (Florence Gould Hall, French Institute–Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 15 at 8.)

MUIR STRING QUARTET—Playing compositions by Vladimir Ussachevsky, Schubert, and Brahms. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET—In the second of six concerts devoted to Beethoven's string quartets. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 17 at 3.)

MERIDIAN STRING QUARTET—*With* Lev Natochenny, in piano quintets by Shostakovich, Schnittke, and Brahms. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. Feb. 17 at 8.)

ALBAN BERG QUARTET—Playing works by Mozart, Schnittke, and Smetana. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 18 at 2.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ENSEMBLES—Members of the orchestra performing works by Michael Haydn, Brahms, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 18 at 3.)

JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL—Flute, in an all-Bach recital. With John Steele Ritter, harpsichord. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 18 at 3.)

HAROLD STOVER—Organ. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 18 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

MUSIC BEFORE 1800—Presenting Pomerium Musices, a vocal ensemble, in a program of Italian Renaissance music. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. Feb. 18 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

ROBERT TAUB—Piano, performing, among other works, a première by Milton Babbitt. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 19 at 8.)

ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET—Playing works by Schumann and Janáček. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 20 at 6. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

CHELSEA CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Playing works by Telemann and Mozart, among others. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

LEONIDAS KAVAKOS—Violin. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

OMEGA—Playing chamber music by Mozart, Chopin, and Messiaen. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

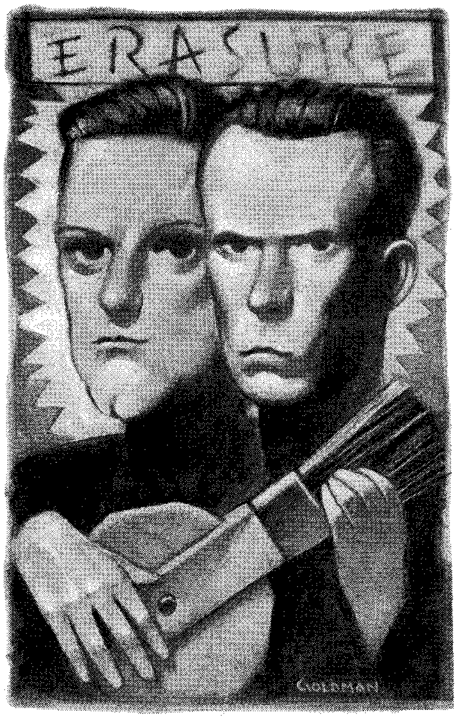
PARNASSUS—A contemporary chamber ensemble conducted by Anthony Korf. With Mark Bleeke, tenor. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 20 at 8.)

AURORA—A baroque chamber ensemble, playing works by William Byrd, Andrew Parcham, Bach, Telemann, and others. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Feb. 21 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the performance.)

DANIEL BARENBOIM—Piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

HAROUTUNE BEDELIAN AND GERALD ROBBINS—Violin and piano. The program includes the première of a work by Thea Musgrove called "Colloquy." (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

CHANTICLEER—An all-male a-cappella group singing, among other things, works by Ligeti, David Carlson, and Josquin des Prez. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 21 at 8.)



Erasure

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Erasure—Erasure is Vince Clarke and Andy Bell. Clarke is the Bill Wyman of synth-pop players: without a hint of movement, he pumps out irresistible synthesized dance rhythms. Bell is the singer who flamboyantly pitches his songs of love, rarely unrequited, to a very receptive crowd. Their latest album, "Wild," is not up to the pop standards they set for themselves on 1988's "The Innocents," but there are still a few delicious throwaways hidden inside. There is nothing subtle about Erasure—they'll pound you into a dance floor—but Andy Bell is one of the few performers to come out of the closet with wardrobe in tow. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 422-9222. Feb. 15 at 8. . . . ¶ Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Feb. 16 at 8.)

The Roches—Like characters in an Ann Beattie story (or maybe a little like Ann Beattie herself), Maggie, Terre, and Suzzy Roche offer slightly flip, astringent, and telling self-analysis—their songs are heartfelt-deadpan dispatches on romantic sabotage and middle-of-the-night honesty. They take turns around the kitchen table, comment on and joke about each other's stories, and make it all transcendent with ethereal, genetically tuned harmonies. They've got a rich new album, "Speak," and a first-rate catalogue of earlier kookie and haunting songs to perform for the home-town crowd. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 17 at 7 and 10:30.)

Tears for Fears—Their platinum disks from 1985's "Songs from the Big Chair" (which sold about eight million copies) came at you as fast as Frisbees. It took four years for the follow-up, "The Seeds of Love," to be completed, and chances are it won't do as well. The arrangements are more accomplished, but it has a dearth of snappy radio tunes—the group has moved away from a pop-soul product toward a more satisfying blend of rock and soul. By adding Oleta Adams on vocals, Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith have created a group that delivers sophisticated, challenging music: lovely stuff. With Deborah Harry. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Feb. 18 at 7:30.)

Roberta Flack and Hugh Masekela—Roberta Flack was the premier soul diva of the early seventies, and her best-known hits ("The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," "Killing Me Softly with His Song," and "Feel Like Makin' Love") are secular hymns to erotic devotion. Her candle has not burned so intensely since then, but her voice is still a breathy and plangent devastator. The South African trumpeter and bandleader Hugh Masekela had his pop moment, too, with "Grazing in the Grass" in 1968, but his current group, the Kalahari Band, offers a red-hot melting pot of jazz, township Mbaqanga, and soul groove that is far tastier than mere pop. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Feb. 19 at 8.)

Andrea Marcovicci—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 16 at 8.

Whitesnake—With Kix. (Nassau Coliseum. Feb. 16 at 8.)

Grover Washington, Jr., and Phyllis Hyman—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Feb. 16 at 8 and midnight.

Joanne Brackeen—Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Feb. 16 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Blues Concerts—Feb. 16 at 8: Blues from Mississippi, with Otha Turner's Rising Star Fife & Drum Band, Jack Johnson, and Junior Kimbrough. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8: Blues from Chicago, with the Carey Bell Blues Band, George (Mojo) Buford, and Carlos Johnson. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 619-1980.)

Tribute to Alec Wilder—With Marian McPartland, Marlene VerPlanck, the New York Woodwind Quintet, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 17 at 2. For information about tickets, call 989-3426.)

"Legends of Rock and Roll"—With the Platters, Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge, the Drifters, the Del Vikings, and others. (Town Hall. Feb. 18 at 2 and 8.)

Pierce Turner—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 19 at 8.

Kodo—Percussionists from Japan. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Feb. 20 at 7:30 and Feb. 21 at 8. Through Feb. 25.)

Richard Thompson—St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Feb. 21 at 8.

The Kitchen—Feb. 15-16: Tim Berne and Herb Robertson, with the P-1 Orchestra. . . . ¶ Feb. 17: Jean-Paul Bourelly, Michael Hill, Vernon Reid, Corey Glover, and other Black Rock Coalition musicians. . . . ¶ Feb. 18: The Arcado String Trio. (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Evenings at 8:30.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Feb. 14 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Feb. 19 at 1:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Calgary Flames, Feb. 13 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, Feb. 17 at 2:05.

Devils—Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, Feb. 12. . . . ¶ Vs. the Rangers, Feb. 16. (Game time, 7:45.)

Knicks—Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, Feb. 17 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Feb. 15. . . . ¶ Vs. the Denver Nuggets, Feb. 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota Timberwolves, Feb. 21. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; the Devils and the Nets play at the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders play at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 422-9222.)

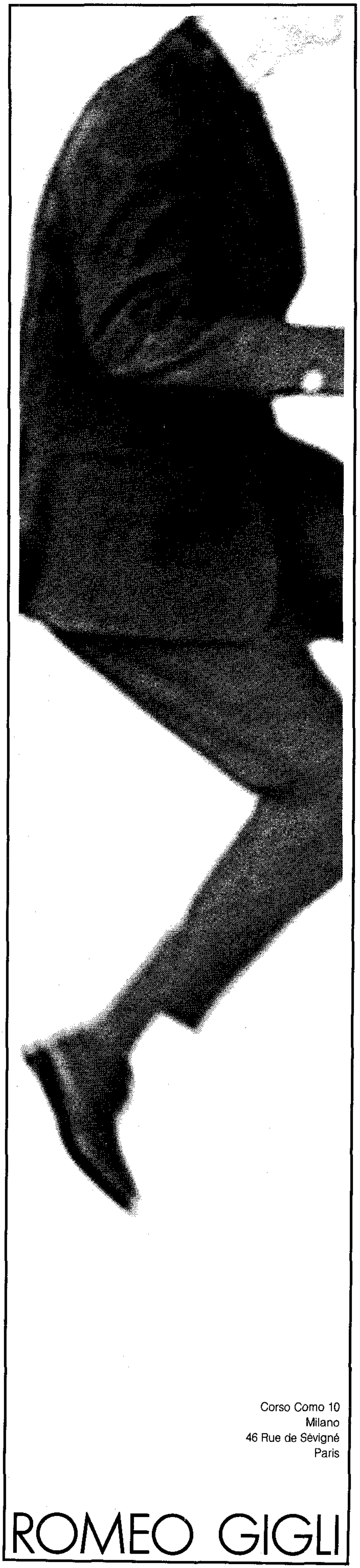
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Tea Dancing—Take your honey over to the Park Avenue Plaza (an indoor atrium at 55 E. 52nd St.) at 3 on February 17 for some semi-formal sashaying to live music by the Jordan Sandke quintet; a cup or two of good, hot tea; and an afternoon of retro-romance, free of charge.

En Garde—The Fifth Annual Festival of English Sword Dances—with eleven groups of folk dancers and instrumentalists who play the fiddle, the flute, the dulcimer, and the accordion—takes place on Feb. 17-18 at locations all over town. Look for the dancers and their swords on Feb. 17 in Penn Station (at 9:15), at the Dairy in Central Park (at 1 and 3), at South Street Seaport (at 3), and at Grand Central Terminal (at 4:15); and on Feb. 18 at the World Trade Center (2:30).

Allen Ginsberg—Reading from his own poetry. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. Feb. 15 at 7. Tickets at the door.)

Memoranda—Lincoln's birthday is Feb. 12; Valentine's Day is Feb. 14; Washington's birthday is observed on Feb. 19. . . . ¶ An exhibition of Catalonian art, furniture, and fashion runs through Feb. 24 at the 69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 25th St. (Daily, 10 to 5.)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THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enemies, A Love Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Black Rain" (directed by Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 15: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†). . . . ¶ Films made by Merchant Ivory Productions. Feb. 16: "Shakespeare Wallah" (1965, James Ivory), with Shashi Kapoor. . . . Feb. 17: "Quartet" (1981, Ivory), with Alan Bates, Maggie Smith, Isabelle Adjani, and Anthony Higgins. . . . Feb. 18: "Maurice" (1987, Ivory), with James Wilby, Hugh Grant, and Rupert Graves. . . . Feb. 19: "The Deceivers" (1988, Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan. . . . Feb. 20: "The Europeans" (1979, Ivory), with Lee Remick, Tom Woodward, Lisa Eichhorn, and Kristin Griffith. . . . Feb. 21: "Bombay Talkie" (†).
Theatre 4: "New Year's Day" (Henry Jaglom).
Theatre 5: "Torrents of Spring" (Jerzy Skolimowski), with Timothy Hutton, Nastassja Kinski, and Valeria Golino.
Theatre 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Feb. 15: "L'État Sauvage" (1978, Francis Girod; in French), with Claude Brasseur and Marie-Christine Barrault.
Feb. 16-17: "Morocco" (1930, Joseph von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Gary Cooper, and Adolphe Menjou.
Feb. 18 and 20: "Dishonored" (1931, von Sternberg), with Dietrich and Victor McLaglen.
From Feb. 21: "Shanghai Express" (1932, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Clive Brook, Warner Oland, and Anna May Wong.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 2: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.
Theatre 3: "Glory" (†).

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through Feb. 15: "Internal Affairs" (†).
From Feb. 16: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 2: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 3: "Music Box" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 15: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland. From Feb. 16: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 5: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 6: "Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.

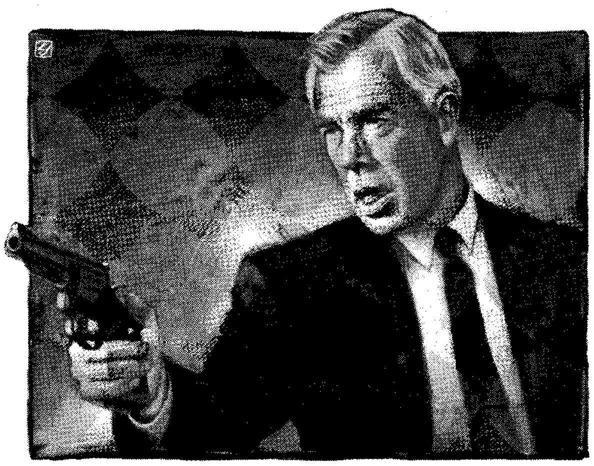
Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland. From Feb. 16: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 3: "Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through Feb. 15: "The War of the Roses" (†).
From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Homer and Eddie" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with James Belushi and Whoopi Goldberg.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).



Lee Marvin in "Point Blank"

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Music Box" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland. From Feb. 16: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg, Craig Sheffer, Anne Bobby, and Charles Haid.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Steel Magnolias" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "The War of the Roses" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "The Little Mermaid" (†); and (evenings only) "Mack the Knife" (Menahem Golan), with Raul Julia.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.
Theatre 2: "Glory" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Feb. 15: "Torrents of Spring" (Jerzy Skolimowski), with Timothy Hutton, Nastassja Kinski, and Valeria Golino.
From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 15: "Heart Condition" (James D. Parriott), with Bob Hoskins, Denzel Washington, and Chloe Webb. From Feb. 16: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 2: "Internal Affairs" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "The War of the Roses" (†). From Feb. 16: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982, directed by Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Story of Women" (Claude Chabrol; in French), with Isabelle Huppert.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The War of the Roses" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Heart Condition" (James D. Parriott), with Bob Hoskins, Denzel Washington, and Chloe Webb. From Feb. 16: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland. From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Little Mermaid" (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 3: "Henry V" (†).
Theatre 4: "Triumph of the Spirit" (Robert M. Young), with Willem Dafoe, Edward James Olmos, and Robert Loggia.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.
Theatre 3: "Steel Magnolias" (†).
Theatre 4: "The War of the Roses" (†).
Theatre 5: "Enemies, A Love Story" (†).
Theatre 6: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 7: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 8: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.
Theatre 9: Through Feb. 15: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†). From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 15: "Crack House." From Feb. 16: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Little Mermaid" (†); and (evenings only) "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Olympia Dukakis, George Segal, and Abe Vigoda.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 15: "Tremors" (Ron Underwood), with Kevin Bacon and Fred Ward. From Feb. 16: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†). From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.
Theatre 3: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
Theatre 4: "Ski Patrol" (Richard Correll).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 15: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard. From Feb. 16: "Courage Mountain" (Christopher Leitch), with Juliette Caton, Charlie Sheen, Leslie Caron, and Jan Rubeš.
Theatre 6: "Field of Dreams" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Henry V" (†).

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Roger & Me" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Camille Claudel" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Stanley and Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"The War of the Roses" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sweetie" (Jane Campion).
Theatre 3: "The Plot Against Harry" (Michael Roemer).

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch).
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Time of the Gypsies" (Emir Kusturica; in Romany).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Heart Condition" (James D. Parriott), with Bob Hoskins, Denzel Washington, and Chloe Webb. From Feb. 16: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 3: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 4: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 5: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 6: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "The White Girl" (James Cannady). From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd. From Feb. 16: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg, Craig Sheffer, Anne Bobby, and Charles Haid.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 2: "The War of the Roses" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 15: "Crack House." From Feb. 16: "Nightbreed" (directed by Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg, Craig Sheffer, Anne Bobby, and Charles Haid.
Theatre 4: "The White Girl" (James Cannady).
Theatre 5: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.
Theatre 6: "Loose Cannons" (Bob Clark), with Gene Hackman and Dan Aykroyd.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Feb. 15: "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland.
From Feb. 16: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "The Little Mermaid" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 15: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx. From Feb. 16 (tentative): "Flashback" (Franco Amurri), with Dennis Hopper and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 4: "Internal Affairs" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Heart Condition" (James D. Parriott), with Bob Hoskins, Denzel Washington, and Chloe Webb.

When Gloria Swanson starred in Raoul Walsh's silent hit "Sadie Thompson" (1928), the most popular film version of W. Somerset Maugham's short story "Rain," she embodied the shady lady of the title with a shrewd blend of grit and charm: she was down but not out, dirty but not filthy. When Joan Crawford attacked the role of the gold-hearted tart four years later, in Lewis Milestone's "Rain" (playing February 15 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), she didn't hold anything back. She's torrid and doom-tinged right from the start, when Milestone cuts from close-ups of Sadie's fancy-gal jewelry and shoes to her carnivorous mouth and bottomless eyes. We first see Sadie framed in a cabin door of the steamer that's about to drop her off in Pago Pago, where she'll be stranded for days and persecuted by a professional reformer, Rev. Davidson (Walter Huston). Like the other screen versions of Maugham's story (the third was a ludicrous 1953 semi-musical, "Miss Sadie Thompson," starring Rita Hayworth), this one follows the outlines of the John Colton–Clemmence Randolph stage version (a big hit for Jeanne Eagels), which introduced a bluff, amorous marine to counterbalance Davidson's sexual hypocrisy.

In Milestone's movie, Crawford and Huston seize center screen and never surrender it to the dullards around them without a fight. Straining against her tight clothes, Crawford does some of her best acting with her shoulders and haunches; she slouches toward Hades, while Huston, who always stands erect, harangues her into giving Heaven a chance. He stares down his nose at her even when he wants to jump her bones. The two cut a collision course through the movie's dead weight. Their big scenes get across why bad girls go for self-righteous men—she says she was nobody, now she's somebody, and he tells her she's "radiant and beautiful—one of the daughters of the King." (Is this how televangelists operate?) Even if the movie has three climaxes in the last fifteen minutes, Crawford earns every one of them. In "Rain," she's one powerhouse slut.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Downtown" (Richard Benjamin), with Forest Whitaker and Anthony Edwards.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 15: "Tremors" (Ron Underwood), with Kevin Bacon and Fred Ward. From Feb. 16: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Back to the Future Part II" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson, and Thomas F. Wilson.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Through Feb. 13: "Danton" (1983, directed by Andrzej Wajda; in French), with Gérard Depardieu; and "Under the Sun of Satan" (1987, Maurice Pialat; in French), with Depardieu and Sandrine Bonnaire.
Feb. 14-15: "1900" (1977, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Robert De Niro, Burt Lancaster, and Gérard Depardieu.
Feb. 16-17: "Les Compères" (1984, Francis Véber; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard; and "Buffet Froid" (1980, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Depardieu, Jean Carmet, Bernard Blier, and Geneviève Page.
Feb. 18-19: "Mutiny on the Bounty" (1962, Lewis Milestone), with Marlon Brando, Trevor Howard, and Richard Harris.
Feb. 20-21: "The Nightcomers" (†) and "Burn!" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Feb. 13: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†); and "The Last Picture Show" (1971, Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman.
Feb. 14-15: "Macbeth" (1971, Roman Polanski), with Jon Finch, Francesca Annia, and Martin Shaw; and "Frantic" (1988, Polanski), with Harrison Ford, Betty Buckley, and Emmanuelle Seigner.
Feb. 16-17: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters; and "King, Queen, Knave" (1972, Jerzy Skolimowski), with David Niven, Gina Lollobrigida, and John Moulder-Brown.
Feb. 18: Part 1 of "Little Dorrit" (1988, Christine Edzard), with Derek Jacobi and Alec Guinness.
Feb. 19-20: Part 2 of "Little Dorrit."
From Feb. 21: "Bagdad Café" (1988, Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht, CCH Pounder, Monica Calhoun, and Darron Flagg; and "Powwow Highway" (1989, Jonathan Wacks), with A Martinez.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Through Feb. 13: "The Assault" (1987, Fons Rademakers; in Dutch); and "Images Before My Eyes" (1981, Josh Waletsky), a documentary about Jews in Poland prior to the Second World War.
Feb. 14-15: "Oscar Wilde" (1960, Gregory Ratoff), with Robert Morley and Ralph Richardson; and "Cruising" (1980, William Friedkin), with Al Pacino, Paul Sorvino, Richard Cox, Don Scardino, and Karen Allen.
Feb. 16-17: "Devil in the Flesh" (†); and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977, Luis Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina.
Feb. 18: "Early Summer" (1951, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese); and "Twilight in Tokyo" (1957, Ozu; in Japanese).
Feb. 19-20: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man" (1981, Bertolucci; in Italian), with Ugo Tognazzi and Anouk Aimée.
From Feb. 21: "Gun Crazy" (†); and "The Phenix City Story" (1955, Phil Karlson), with John McIntire, Richard Kiley, and Kathryn Grant.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 12: "Nibelungen Saga" (1924, Fritz Lang; silent).
Feb. 13: "Blackmail" (1929, Alfred Hitchcock), with Anny Ondra, Cyril Richard, and Sara Allgood; and "Sabotage" ("The Woman Alone"; 1936, Hitchcock), with Sylvia Sidney, Oscar Homolka, and Desmond Tester.
Feb. 14: "Love Me Tonight" (1932, Rouben Mamoulian) and "One Hour with You" (1932, Ernst Lubitsch), both with Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald.
Feb. 15: "Rain" (1932, Lewis Milestone), with Joan Crawford, Walter Huston, William Gargan, and Beulah Bondi; and "Of Human Bondage" (1934, John Cromwell), with Bette Davis, Leslie Howard, Frances Dee, and Kay Johnson.
Feb. 16-17: "The Long, Hot Summer" (1958, Martin Ritt), with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Anthony Franciosa, and Orson Welles; and "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Kim Hunter, and Karl Malden.
Feb. 18: "The Tenant" (1976, Roman Polanski), with Polanski, Isabelle Adjani, Melvyn Douglas, Jo Van Fleet, and Shelley Winters; and "Knife in the Water" (1962, Polanski; in Polish).

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Feb. 19: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Andersson, and Nils Poppe.

Feb. 20: "Pretty Poison" (1968, Noel Black), with Anthony Perkins and Tuesday Weld; and "Point Blank" (†).

Feb. 21: "To Catch a Thief" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber; and "Wait Until Dark" (1967, Terence Young), with Audrey Hepburn, Alan Arkin, and Richard Crenna.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Films from Colombia, all in Spanish. Feb. 12 at 2:30: "Details of the Duel" (1988, directed by Sergio Cabrera). . . . Feb. 12 at 6: "The Spider Game" (1985, Leopoldo Pinzón). . . . Feb. 13 at 2:30: "In Search of Maria" (1985, Luis Ospina and Jorge Nieto) and "The Day You Love Me" (1986, Sergio Dow). . . . Feb. 13 at 6 and Feb. 15 at 2: "San Antoñito" (1985, Pepe Sánchez). . . . Feb. 15 at 5: "In Search of Maria" and "The Day You Love Me." . . . ¶ Films directed by Théo Angelopoulos, all in Greek. Feb. 16 at 3: "Athens" (1982). . . . Feb. 16 at 6: "Landscape in the Mist" (1988). . . . Feb. 17 at 1: "Athens." . . . Feb. 17 at 3: "The Travelling Players" (1975). . . . Feb. 18 at 2: "The Beekeeper" (1986). . . . Feb. 18 at 5: "Reconstruction" (1970). . . . Feb. 19 at 3: "O Megalexandros" (1980). . . . Feb. 20 at 2:30: "The Hunters" (1977). . . . Feb. 20 at 6: "Voyage to Cythera" (1984).

THEATRE 2: Feb. 12 at 6:30: "The Territory" (1981, Raúl Ruiz), with Isabel Weingarten and Paul Getty, Jr. Mr. Ruiz will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 3 and 6: "Vienna Is Different: 50 Years After the Anschluss" (1989, David Leitner and Susan Korda), a documentary. . . . ¶ Films from Colombia, most in Spanish. Feb. 16 at 2:30: "Night People" (1984, Victor Gaviria), "Uproar in the Uptown Neighborhood" (1987, Alberto Vides and Luis González), "That Day" (1985, Carlos Mayolo), and "Dead Men's River" (1966, Julio Luzardo). . . . Feb. 17 at 2:30: "The Blue Lobster" (1954, Alvaro Cepeda Samudio, Gabriel García Márquez, Luis Vincens, and Enrique Grau) and "A Time to Die" (1985, Jorge Ali Triana). . . . Feb. 17 at 5: "Myriam's Look" (1966, Clara Riascos) and "Law of the Jungle" (1989, Patricia Castaño and Adelaida Trujillo). . . . Feb. 18 at 2:30: "The Accordionist's Wedding" (1986, Luis Fernando Bottia). . . . Feb. 18 at 5: "The Ambassador from India" (1986, Mario Ribero). . . . Feb. 19 at 2:30: "Myriam's Look" and "Law of the Jungle." . . . Feb. 19 at 5: "Night People," "Uproar in the Uptown Neighborhood," "That Day," and "Dead Men's River." . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 3: "Picture Snatcher" (1933, Lloyd Bacon), with James Cagney, Ralph Bellamy, and Alice White. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 6: "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty or so years. Feb. 13-17: William Faulkner's "Barn Burning" (1980, Peter Werner; PBS), with Tommy Lee Jones, Shawn Whittington, and Diane Kagan; and Ernest J. Gaines' "The Sky Is Gray" (1980, Stan Lathan; PBS), with Olivia Cole, James Bond III, and Cleavon Little. . . . From Feb. 20: Ambrose Bierce's "Parker Adderson, Philosopher" (1977, Arthur Brown; PBS), with Harris Yulin and Douglas Watson; and Stephen Crane's "The Blue Hotel" (1977, Jan Kadar; PBS), with David Warner and James Keach. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." From Feb. 13: Highlights from "Rutland Weekend Television" (1975), written by, and starring, Eric Idle. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ A retrospective of Laurence Olivier's television work. Feb. 13 at 12:15, 2:30, and 6: "Uncle Vanya" (1967, NET), with Olivier, Rosemary Harris, Max Adrian, Joan Plowright, and Michael Redgrave. . . . Feb. 14 at 2:30: "The Merchant of Venice" (1974, ABC), with Olivier. . . . Feb. 15 at 12:15 and 2:30: "The Collection" (1976, Granada), with Olivier, Alan Bates, Malcolm McDowell, and Helen Mirren. . . . Feb. 16 at 12:15 and 2:30: "Voyage Round My Father" (1982, Thames), with Olivier, Bates, Elizabeth Sellars, and Jane Asher. . . . Feb. 17 at 12:15 and 2:30: "Lost Empires, Episode 1" (1986, Granada), with Olivier. . . . From Feb. 20: "The Moon and Sixpence" (1959, Robert Mulligan; NBC), with Olivier. Showings Tuesday at 3 and 6 and Wednesday at 3.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the Riklis Theatre. Films directed by John Ford. Feb. 14 at 2:30: "How Green Was My Valley" (1941), with Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara, Donald Crisp, Anna Lee, and Roddy McDowall. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 2:30: "Wagon Master" (1950), with Ben Johnson, Harry Carey, Jr., Joanne Dru, and Ward Bond. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 2:30: "Donovan's Reef" (1963), with John Wayne and Lee Marvin. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 1: "In Memoriam Manuel Quezon" (1946), "This Is Korea" (1951), and "The Growler Story" (1957), all documentaries. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 4: "The Wings of Eagles" (1957), with Wayne, O'Hara, Dan Dailey, and Bond. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 1: "Mogambo" (1953), with Clark Gable, Ava Gardner, and Grace Kelly. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 4: "Gideon of Scotland Yard" (1958), with Jack Hawkins, Dianne Foster, Anna Massey, and Cyril Cusack. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 2:30: "Mogambo."

French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—Feb. 14 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "A Few Days with Me" (1988, Claude Sautet; in French), with Daniel Auteuil, Sandrine Bonnaire, Jean-Pierre Marielle, and Dominique Lavanant. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Pierrot le Fou" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo, Anna Karina, Dirk Sanders, and Raymond Devos.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Feb. 16 at 6:30: "Growing Up" (1955, Heinoshuke Gosho; in Japanese) and "An Inn at Osaka" (1954, Gosho; in Japanese).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Feb. 16 at 1: "The Joe Louis Story" (1953, Robert Gordon), with Coley Wallace, Paul Stewart, Hilda Simms, and James Edwards; "The Nat 'King' Cole Story" (1989), a documentary; and "A Raisin in the Sun" (1961, Daniel Petrie), with Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee, Diana Sands, Al Freeman, Jr., and Ivan Dixon. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 6:30: "Abby" (1974, William Girdler), with William Marshall, Carol Speed, and Terry Carter; and "J. D.'s Revenge" (1976, Arthur Marks), with Glynn Turman, Lou Gossett, Jr., and Joan Pringle.

Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Romance, Gangsters and Chow Yun-Fat," a series of films starring Chow, a contemporary Hong Kong matinée idol, all in Cantonese. Feb. 17 at 6:30 and Feb. 18 at 5: "The Killer." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8:30 and Feb. 18 at 7: "A Better Tomorrow."

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

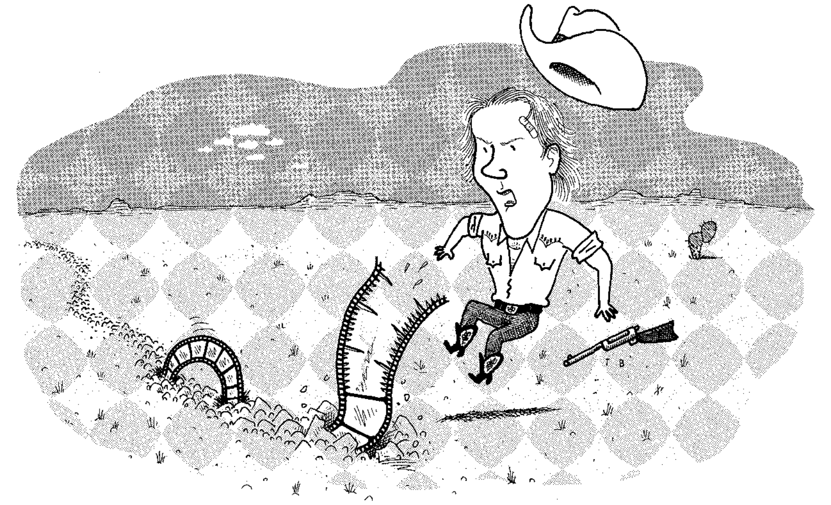
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Bombay Talkie (1970)—A James Ivory film about a bored English woman novelist (Jennifer Kendal) who destroys the life of a young Indian film star (Shashi Kapoor). Ivory's attempt to use the clichés of early Hollywood melodramas for an ironic effect doesn't work out, but the film is full of fine marginal details—a guru showing his followers color slides of his conquest of Los Angeles, the preparations for a musical film, with plump-bottomed Indian girls dancing on giant typewriter keys. Screenplay by R. Prawer Jhabvala and Ivory; cinematography by Subrata Mitra.—P.K. (Angelika Film Center; Feb. 21.)

Born on the Fourth of July—An antiwar epic, it's like one of those commemorative issues of *Life*. This one covers 1956 to 1976, and the counterculture is presented in a nostalgic, aesthetically reactionary way: it's made part of our certified public memories. The director, Oliver Stone, plays bumper cars with the camera and uses cutting to jam you into the action, and you can't even enjoy his uncouthness, because it's put at the service of sanctimony. The pure of heart, Catholic and patriotic hero Ron Kovic (Tom Cruise) thinks war is how he'll prove himself a man. He joins the Marine Corps and is sent to Vietnam; in 1968, his spine is severed, and he's left in a wheelchair, impotent, paralyzed from the chest down. The movie is a scream of rage at how he was betrayed, mutilated, neglected; it's also an uplifting account of how he boozed, quarrelled with everyone, and despaired until he stopped being contemptuous of the war protesters and became active in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Overblown right from the start, this story is constructed as a series of blackout episodes that suggest the Stations of the Cross; rising strings alert you to the heavy stuff. Then the finale—Resurrection—takes Ron into white light, and John Williams lays on the trumpets. The script, by Stone and Kovic, is based on Kovic's autobiography. With Willem Dafoe, Tom Berenger, Raymond J. Barry as the gentle father, Caroline Kava as the castrating Mom, Kyra Sedgwick as Donna, and Abbie Hoffman.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/22/90.) (Baronet, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Bijou Cinema; starting Feb. 16.)

Burn! (1970)—Gillo Pontecorvo's luxuriant, ecstatic epic about a mid-nineteenth-century slave uprising on a fictitious Spanish-speaking Caribbean island is told from a neo-Marxist, Frantz Fanonian point of view. It is an attempt to plant an insurrectionary fuse within a swashbuckler—to use a popular costume-adventure form to arouse black revolutionary passions. Marlon Brando plays a British agent provocateur who instigates the revolt and then cynically crushes it; he personifies colonial manipulative policies as well as, by implication, the American involvement in Vietnam. As Pontecorvo demonstrated in "The Battle of Algiers," he has a true gift for epic filmmaking: he can keep masses of people in movement so we care about them. And here, in his feeling for crowds and battles, for color and images, and for visual rhythms, he's a sensuous, intoxicating director. When blacks ride white horses that prance to what sounds like a syncopated Gregorian chant, the sequence is so shimmering and showy that one knows Pontecorvo and his cinematographer, Marcello Gatti, and his composer, Ennio Morricone, couldn't resist it. "Burn!" is politically schematic, and almost every line of dialogue jogs us to fit it into a deterministic theory of history, yet the film is large-spirited. Written by Pontecorvo, Franco Solinas, and Georgio Arlorio. With Evaristo Marquez as the black leader, and Renato Salvatori as the mulatto puppet. Shot partly in the Colombian seaport Cartagena. —P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Feb. 20-21.)

Camille Claudel—She lived, she loved, she sculpted, she went nuts. Bruno Nuytten's first film is a de-luxe biography of a nearly forgotten (but attractive!) artist who studied with the great Rodin, became his assistant and lover, and then struggled to break free of his influence and discover her own identity as a sculptor. Willful (and comely) as she is, Camille never manages to shake her obsession with Rodin, and she makes a mess of her life and her career. This is rich material, but the movie is a real chore to sit through: it's two and a half hours long, and the pace is sluggish. Nuytten, a superb cinematographer ("French Provincial," "Barocco"), doesn't seem to know how to tell a story—not one as complex as this, anyway. Isabelle Adjani plays Camille (there are obvious similarities to her role in "The Story of Adèle H.") with terrific abandon and intensity, yet the performance isn't satisfying; the film is so poorly shaped as drama that even her most striking moments seem to come out of nowhere. Also



Kevin Bacon in "Tremors"

with Gérard Depardieu as Rodin, Laurent Grevill as Paul Claudel (Camille's younger brother, who became a well-known writer), and Alain Cuny. The script, by Nuytten and Marilyn Goldin, is based on a biography by Reine-Marie Paris. In French.—T.R. (Paris.)

Crimes and Misdemeanors—Written and directed by Woody Allen, it's a sad, censuring look at an eminent ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching. Allen is making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. Woody Allen himself plays a little, grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker who falls in love but can't compete for the woman (Mia Farrow) against a darling of the media, a tall, egomaniacal TV producer played with a wonderfully smug, screwy abandon by Alan Alda. Except for Alda, and Landau (when he's showing nervous impatience), and Jerry Orbach, who plays the ophthalmologist's shady brother, most of the large cast is proficient yet brittle and dull. With Sam Waterston (as a rabbi who's going blind), Anjelica Huston, Claire Bloom, Joanna Gleason, Caroline Aaron, Nora Ephron in a bit, and Daryl Hannah—uncredited, but looking so luscious she almost stops the show. The bland cinematography is by Sven Nykvist.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Carnegie Screening Room. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; starting Feb. 16.)

Devil in the Flesh (1987)—Madness, politics, and sexual frenzy: business as usual for director Marco Bellocchio, who has explored his obsessions brilliantly in films like "Fists in the Pocket," "China Is Near," and "Leap Into the Void." In this very loose adaptation of the famous Raymond Radiguet novel about an affair between a student and a young married woman (filmed once before, by Claude Autant-Lara in 1947), Bellocchio's work is enervated and uncertain. There are flashes of his audacity and cruel wit, but the movie never quite comes to life. Even the explicit lovemaking scenes that earned this picture its X rating seem, in context, a little academic: most of the time, Bellocchio's movie plays as a kind of structuralist dissertation on the concepts of "in" and "out." With Maruschka Detmers (a powerful sexual presence but a terrible actress) and Federico Pitzalis as the lovers. Cinematography by Giuseppe Lanci. In Italian.—T.R. (Thalia SoHo; Feb. 16-17.)

Do the Right Thing—The third feature by Spike Lee takes place in the black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, on a punishingly hot day; the focus of the action is a pizzeria, Sal's Famous, which is apparently the last white-owned business on the block; and the climax is a riot sparked by a monstrous act of police brutality. At its most basic, Lee's intention is to demonstrate how in a racially polarized society the slow accumulation of small irritations can swell to something huge and ugly and lethal. It's a solid idea for a movie, and initially the picture provides its share of incidental pleasures. And although most of the many characters Lee shows us are types, at least there are a lot of different ones, and their encounters are often funny. But Lee goes wrong by pushing his material to a "powerful" climax, a Scorsese-like explosion of violence; he sacrifices political clarity for the sake of the big statement. He's nimble-witted and passionate, but his movie seems to shout at us rather than speak to us. In addition to writing, producing, and directing, Lee plays the pivotal role of Mookie, the pizza deliveryman. Others in the cast are Danny Aiello (as Sal), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, Rosie Perez, Joie Lee, John Turturro, and Richard Edson; as a trio of middle-aged street-corner philosophers, Paul Benjamin, Frankie Faison, and Robin Harris are responsible for the movie's best, loosest scenes.—T.R. (7/24/89) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Driving Miss Daisy—Alfred Uhry's adaptation of his much honored play is still full of manipulative bits—it's virtually all manipulative bits—but the director, Bruce Beresford, understands how to work them while cutting down on their obviousness. Set in Atlanta, starting in 1948, the movie is the story of the companionship that develops between stubborn, suspicious Miss Daisy (Jessica Tandy), a wealthy Jewish widow of seventy-two, and her resilient chauffeur, Hoke (Morgan Freeman), a widower about a decade younger than she is. Essentially, it's about how he changes her. He's made upright, considerate, humane—he's made perfect—so that nothing will disturb our appreciation of the gentle, bittersweet reverie we're watching. But it's acted (and directed) eloquently. Tandy and Freeman achieve a beautiful equilibrium. And Dan Aykroyd comes through with a fine performance as Miss Daisy's good-old-boy son. With Esther Rolle and Patti LuPone.—P.K. (12/25/89) (68th St. Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and West Side Cinema.)

Drugstore Cowboy—Nihilistic humor rarely bubbles up in a movie as freely as it does here. Set in Portland, Oregon, in 1971, the story is about two couples who live together and travel around the Pacific Northwest robbing hospitals and pharmacies, grabbing fistfuls of pills and capsules. They're like a junkie version of Clyde Barrow's gang. The director, Gus Van Sant, takes us inside a lot of underground attitudes: the druggies are monomaniacal about leading an aimless existence—they see themselves as romantic figures. They're comic, but they're not put down for being comic. The picture keeps you laughing because it's so nonjudgmental. Van Sant is half in and half out of the desire of adolescents to remain kids forever. As the gang's twenty-six-year-old leader, Matt Dillon brings the role a light self-mockery that helps set the tone of the film, and Kelly Lynch is strikingly effective as the leader's wife. Also with James Le Gros, Heather Graham, James Remar, Max Perlich, Beah Richards, Grace Zabriskie, and William Burroughs. The script, by the director and Daniel Yost, was based on an unpublished novel by James Fogle, who's in prison for drug-related robberies.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

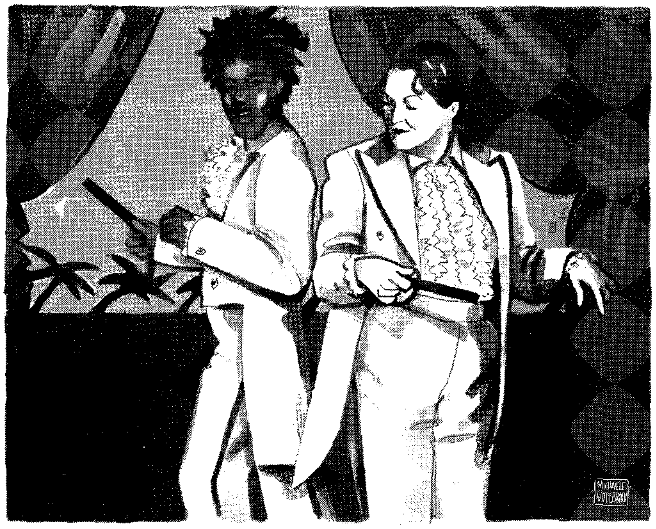
Enemies, A Love Story—Emotionally overwhelming. Adapted from Isaac Bashevis Singer's New York City novel, set in 1949—a post-Holocaust sex farce in which three passionately jealous women are in love with a guilt-ridden, self-effacing man. The director, Paul Mazursky, has gathered a superbly balanced cast and kept the action so smooth that the viewer is carried along on a tide of mystical slyness. Ron Silver is the Polish-Jewish intellectual who survived the Final Solution by hiding in a hayloft. Margaret Sophie Stein is the Gentile peasant (now his wife) who risked her life to take care of him. Lena Olin is his diabolically willful mistress, a survivor of the camps. Anjelica Huston is the wife (with an erotic aura) he thought was killed by the Nazis. This richly satisfying movie is restrained, yet it has its own deeply crazy turmoil. Mazursky pulls the rug out from under us, and we drop through the farce. With Alan King, Judith Malina, Phil Leeds, and Mazursky.—P.K. (12/25/89) (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Fabulous Baker Boys—Two lounge pianists (brothers, played by Beau and Jeff Bridges) add a vocalist (Michelle Pfeiffer) to their act, and she changes their lives. This romantic fantasy has a forties-movie sultriness and an eighties movie-struck melancholy. Put them together and you have a movie in which eighties glamour is being defined. The young writer-director Steve Kloves trips off your bluesy, narcissistic feelings about popular music and commercial-movie emotions; he invites you to laugh if you want to. (You feel the heat even if you're laughing.) The three stars seem perfect at what they're doing—newly minted icons. When Pfeiffer (who does her own singing) delivers "Makin' Whoopee," while crawling over a grand piano like a long-legged kitty-cat, she rivals Rita Hayworth in "Gilda."—P.K. (10/16/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas; through Feb. 15. . . . ¶ Cinema Village; Feb. 12-13.)

Field of Dreams—Doggerel emotion. Kevin Costner, a New Age farmer in Iowa, longs to be reconciled with his dead father, a minor-league baseball player whose outlook he had rejected in the sixties. He hears a whispered command to build a baseball field, and when he does the spirits of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta) and the other White Sox who were barred from baseball for life after the 1919 World Series scandal arrive and play regularly. This is only the beginning of the hero's mystical encounters. That the film is sincere doesn't mean it's not manipulative; when the weepers in the audience start up, you may feel like a pariah if you're not moved. Adapted by the writer-director Phil Alden Robinson from W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel, "Shoeless Joe."—P.K. (5/1/89) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Glory—This Civil War epic, based on fiery, spirit-stirring material that has never before been tapped for the movies, is emotionally moving even when the scenes falter. The 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was the first black fighting unit to be formed in the North, and the white colonel in command of the effort to prove that black men had the discipline and valor to stand up against the enemy was Robert Gould Shaw, the twenty-five-year-old son of abolitionists. As the small, sad-faced Shaw, Matthew Broderick shows us the misery of a softhearted commanding officer who is determined to prepare his men for what's ahead. Denzel Washington (as an ornery, troublemaking runaway slave), Morgan Freeman (who brings great moral authority to his role of a gravedigger-turned-soldier), and Andre Braugher (who plays a bookish recruit) are the usual representative group of enlistees who bicker and quarrel before they shape up and become fine soldiers, but the actors perform the roles as if they've never been played before. Although the script is a conventional melodrama, the director, Edward Zwick, has made something more thoughtful than that. He doesn't have the instinct for images that would burst the written framework, but he's made a good film on a great subject. With Jihmi Kennedy, who is quietly impressive as a backcountry recruit, and Cary Elwes as a white officer. The screenplay, based partly on Shaw's letters, is by Kevin Jarre. The cinematography is by Freddie Francis, and the score, which features the Boys Choir of Harlem, is by James Horner.—P.K. (2/5/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Gun Crazy (1949)—Peggy Cummins and John Dall in a tawdry version of the Bonnie and Clyde story. Cummins is a really mean broad, whose partner is her desperately eager victim. In its B-picture way, the movie has a fascinating crumminess. With Morris Carnovsky and Berry Kroeger. Directed by Joseph H. Lewis, from a screenplay based on MacKinlay Kantor's *SatEvePost* story, and credited to Kantor and Millard Kaufman. Dalton Trumbo, who was blacklisted at the time, later revealed that he wrote the script and persuaded Kaufman to let his name be used.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; starting Feb. 21.)



At the Cinema Village, CCH Pounder and Marianne Sägebrecht in "Bagdad Café"

Henry V—Adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, this fast-paced version isn't exultant, like the one made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacular effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Brian Blessed as Exeter, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely, Robert Stephens as Pistol, Emma Thompson as Katherine, Geraldine McEwan as Alice, Christian Bale as Falstaff's boy, and, best of all, perhaps, Ian Holm as the chattering Welshman Fluellen.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Quad Cinema, and Festival.)

Internal Affairs—This sophisticated variant of other L.A. cops-and-coke-and-art-world thrillers is art-house sleaze, with a creepy, rhythmic quality that sucks you in and keeps you amused. It has an ingeniously nasty subtext—a dirty, sexy twist on the Iago-Othello relationship. This Iago is a prosperous veteran cop, played by Richard Gere, who's being investigated by two officers from the Police Department's internal-affairs division: a righteous, ramrod-straight Latino (Andy Garcia) with a beautiful blond wife, and his sane, honest partner (Laurie Metcalf). Gere torments the stiff-backed Othello (Garcia), boasting of his adulterous conquest of the blond wife, and manipulates him into a jealous rage. Gere slithers through the picture very dexterously, but Garcia gives a one-note, glaring-eyed performance: except for his key, violent explosions (which are terrific), he's so rigid he's barely human. As Garcia's partner, a lesbian who doesn't try to ingratiate herself with anybody, Metcalf gives a strong, contained performance. You can't recommend this movie with a straight face—it casts a slimy-naughty spell. It's bad fun. Directed by Mike Figgis, whose previous feature was the 1988 "Stormy Monday." The smart script is by Henry Bean. With Nancy Travis, Annabella Sciorra, and John Kapelos and Katherine Borowitz as Steve and Tova.—P.K. (2/5/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Bijou Cinema; through Feb. 15.)

The Little Mermaid—Disney-style kitsch. It's technologically sophisticated, but with just about all the simpering old Disney values in place. They're just slightly updated: the Little Mermaid—a teen-age tootsie in a flirty seashell bra—is like Sleeping Beauty plus tomboy spunk. The film does have a cheerful calypso number ("Under the Sea," by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken), and the color is bright—at least, until the mermaid goes on land, when everything seems to dull out. Pat Carroll provides the voice of Ursula, the Sea Witch; Samuel E. Wright provides the voice of Sebastian.—P.K. (12/11/89) (Quad Cinema, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Cinema 3rd Avenue, and 23rd St. West Triplex. Matinées only.)

Music Box—When the cast and the script are right for Costa-Gavras—as they are here—he can give a courtroom melodrama the pull and excitement of a thriller. Jessica Lange is the Chicago lawyer defending her retired steelworker father (Armin Mueller-Stahl) against deportation to Hungary, where the Communist government is waiting to try him for war crimes. The emotional core of the movie is that during the trial, as the Second World War victims give their accounts, the daughter begins to lose faith in her father's innocence. There are no flashbacks; there's no shock apparatus. We simply take in what they're saying, and we watch her take it in. Lange verges on the astounding. Costa-Gavras provides a low-key, controlled atmosphere, and she fills it with passion. The final plot developments feel fake, but this is a remarkably lucid piece of storytelling. The script is by Joe Eszterhas.—P.K. (1/8/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, and Plaza.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in, yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Fiona Shaw, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

The Nightcomers (1971)—An ingenious but literal-minded prelude to Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw," showing how Peter Quint (Marlon Brando) and Miss Jessel (Stephanie Beacham) corrupted the children. Quite well done—Brando is shockingly sadistic as the working-class lout and Beacham is very fine—yet pointless, since it is effective neither as a horror story nor as a psychological study. It leaves the viewer cold—perhaps even repelled. How could anyone think this movie would be entertaining? Michael Winner directed the English production, from a script by Michael Hastings. With Thora Hird and Harry Andrews.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Feb. 20-21.)

Point Blank (1967)—A showoffy, brutal, somewhat inexplicable account of a crook (Lee Marvin) who seeks justice on his own murderous terms. But it's director John Boorman's virtuosity that is the star. Intermittently dazzling, the film has more energy and invention than Boorman seems to know what to do with. He appears to take the title literally; one comes out exhilarated but bewildered. With Angie Dickinson (she has her best scene slapping Marvin repeatedly—to no effect), Carroll O'Connor, Keenan Wynn, Michael Strong, and John Vernon. The West Coast settings include the actual (though no longer in use) prison on Alcatraz.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 20.)

Roger & Me—Michael Moore's widely praised muckraking documentary is about his two-and-a-half-year pursuit of Roger Smith, the chairman of General Motors, who, according to the film, is directly responsible for closing eleven plants and bringing about the destruction of Flint, Michigan—GM's birthplace and Moore's home town. The film purports to show what was happening in Flint from February, 1987, to August, 1989, but what happens is that Moore, a big shambling joker who's the director, producer, writer, and star, deadpans his way through interviews with an assortment of unlikely people, who are used as stooges. He chases gags and improvises his own version of history: in his account of the plant closings, the worker layoffs, and the construction of tourist attractions, he compresses the events of many years and fiddles with the time sequence. He comes on in a give-'em-hell style, but he breaks faith with the audience. And he does something that is humanly very offensive: "Roger & Me" uses its leftism as a superior attitude. Members of the audience can laugh at ordinary working people and still feel that they're taking a politically correct position. —P.K. (1/8/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Cinema II, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

sex, lies, and videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest: he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Quad Cinema.)

Steel Magnolias—Chalk scraping across a blackboard for two hours.—P.K. (59th Street East Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

The War of the Roses—Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner play Oliver and Barbara Rose, a yuppie couple whose banally "perfect" marriage isn't strong enough to survive their individual mid-life crises. When they decide to divorce, things get real ugly: the Roses' hatred and pettiness keep escalating, to the point of absurdity and far beyond. These successful, eighties-style people are revealed as greedy, self-centered, infantile: they'd rather die than have to sacrifice either their egos or their possessions. "The War of the Roses," written by Michael Leeson (from a novel by Warren Adler), is one of Hollywood's periodic attempts at black comedy, and, like most of its predecessors, it's not quite black enough and not quite funny enough. The director, Danny DeVito, who also acts in the film, seems a bit too pleased with his own outrageousness. The picture has a peculiar, not very satisfying tone: smugly savage.—T.R. (Coronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas; through Feb. 15.)

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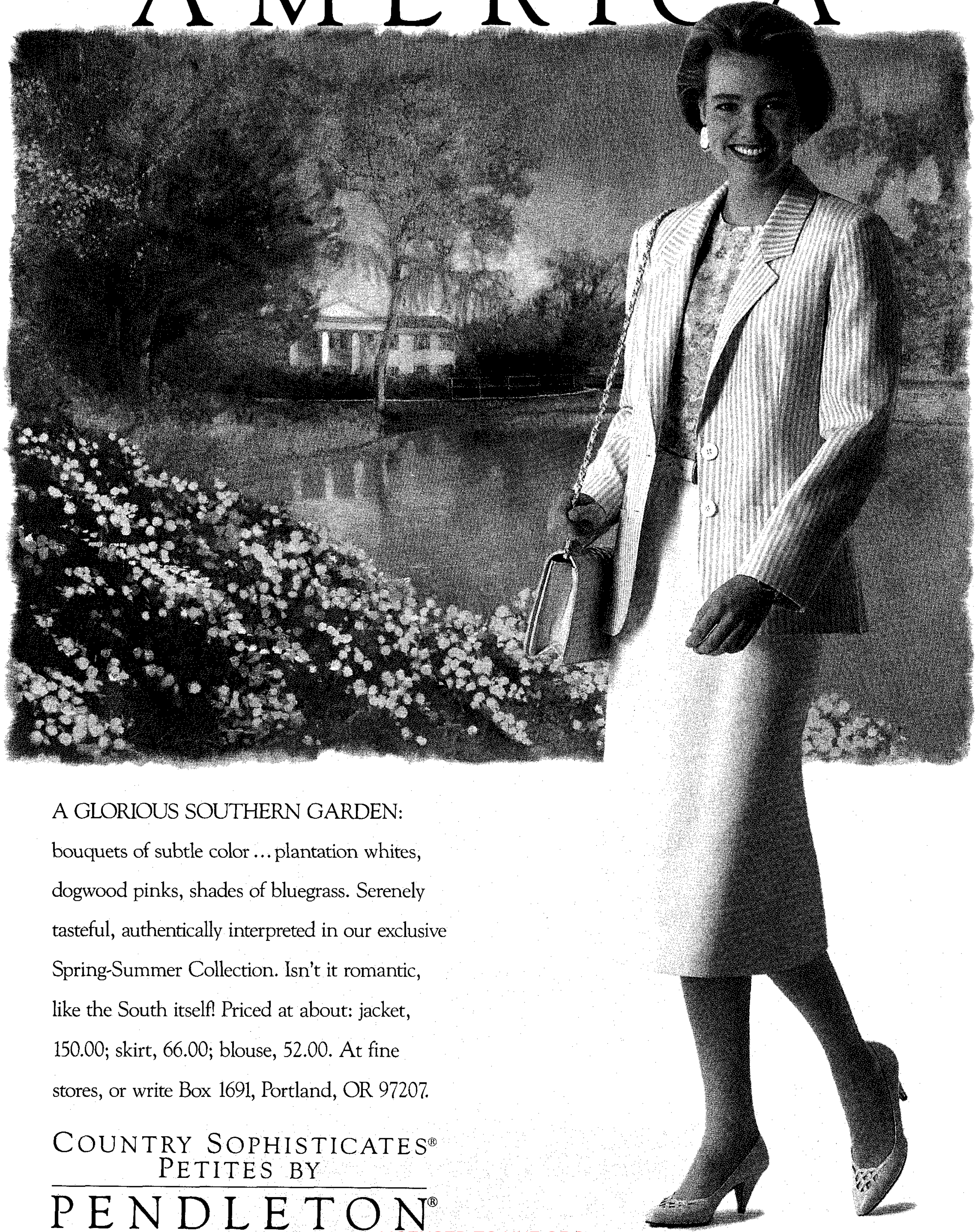

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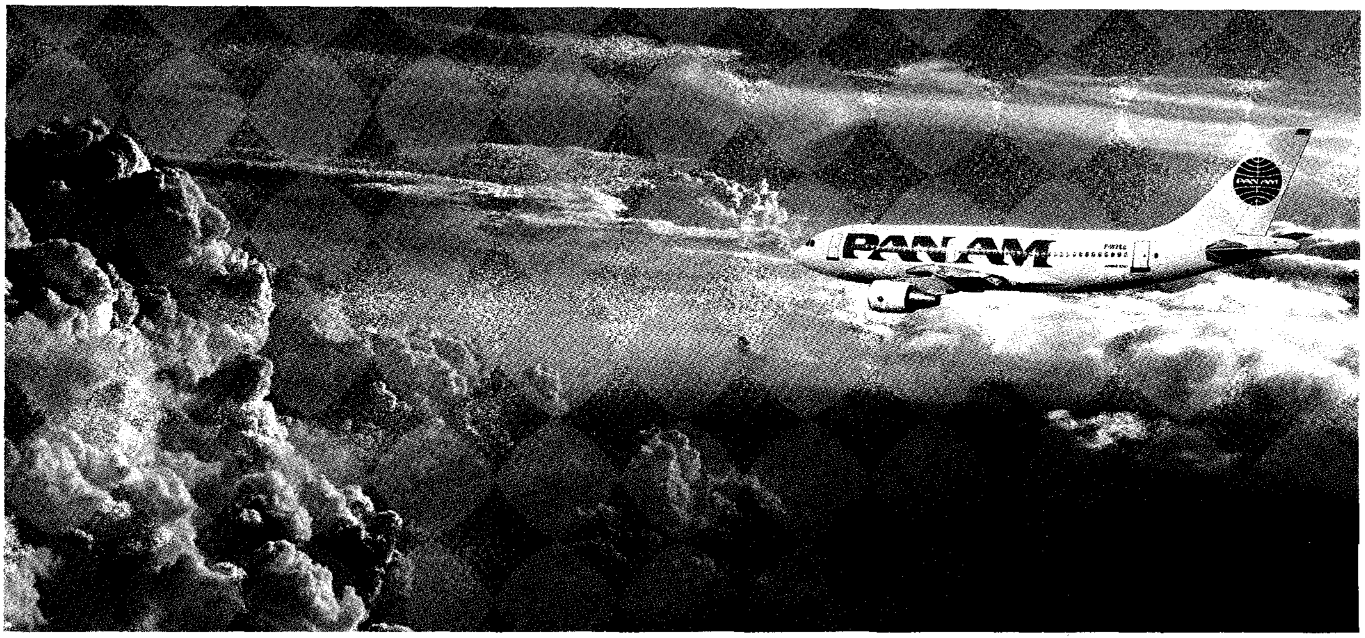

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THE NEW YORKER

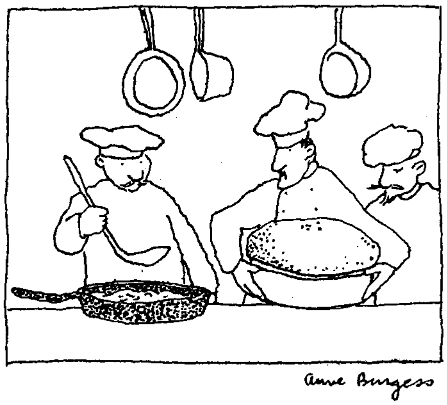
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

LIKE just about everyone else, we imagine, we've started to become almost jaded about what's happening in Eastern Europe. How many times can you tell yourself that the world has turned upside down before it begins to sink in that, by God, the world *has* turned upside down? And from there it's just a few easy steps to taking an upside-down world for granted. Yet there are occasional moments when the patently astonishing succeeds in astonishing us all over again, and we had one of those the other day when Grzegorz Boguta, the co-founder and director of NOWA, which has been Poland's premier underground publishing house (Arendt, Milosz, Grass, Orwell, Kundera, Roth, etc.), dropped by our office during a brief visit to this country.

Mr. Boguta is a slight, owlish, sweet-natured young man. (He's only thirty-seven, and it's startling to realize that in addition to working full time as a biophysicist he has been running his publishing enterprise for over thirteen years now—most of them dangerous ones.) In the middle of our conversation, Mr. Boguta reached into his satchel and took out an elegantly embossed cream-colored invitation to an official state function—the President of the Polish Republic, Wojciech Jaruzelski, inviting Grzegorz Boguta to a reception honoring the visiting President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, His Excellency Mr. Václav Havel. That brought us up short. "Imagine how *I* felt when I got it," Mr. Boguta said, smiling. We tried to. General Jaruzelski, after all, had interned Boguta for over a year after imposing martial law, in 1981, and the General's bureaucrats had continued to make life as vexatious as possible for him until almost yesterday. "And imagine how *he* felt," Boguta went on, pointing to the name of the honored guest. "Remember, it was one of Jaruzelski's first tasks after he was appointed Defense Minister, in 1968, to direct Poland's Warsaw Pact forces as they poured over the border to crush the Prague Spring."

Actually, Mr. Boguta told us, he attended two receptions for Havel during the Czech President's whirlwind visit to Warsaw late last month. The first, at the Czech Embassy, was limited to onetime oppositionists—Michnik, Kuron, Litynski, and so forth, on the Polish side, and Havel heading a like group on the Czech. "The same people who used to sneak up to the Czech-Polish border for occasional meetings high above some remote mountain pass," Mr. Boguta explained. "And now we were meeting in Warsaw—*in the Czech Embassy!*" Later that day had come Jaruzelski's reception. "It was truly bizarre," Boguta recalled. "Jaruzelski and his colleagues were all very stern and clearly uncomfortable. But then Havel rose to propose a toast. He was formal and at the same time easygoing, reminding everyone that, while the Polish President was a general, the highest rank he himself had ever attained was private, and yet now, as President, he commanded an Army. He said he hoped that General Jaruzelski might be able to give him some guidance."



Mr. Boguta regaled us with a few more such stories, but the feeling he conveyed was not one of unalloyed celebration. On the contrary, he seemed anxious and worried. "You'd think we could bask in our glorious triumph these days," he said when we asked him about the mood back in Poland. "But the fact is that we're facing an absolute catastrophe—especially those of us involved in Polish culture. It's a terrible paradox: we are quickly becoming the victims of the free market we fought to establish." He went on to describe some of the results of the sudden transition to an open market which Solidarity's government decreed at the beginning of January. "Prices have shot up enormously for everything—food, housing, energy," he said. "But salaries are being strictly controlled. So during the month of January people's standard of living dropped fifteen per cent, and this month it still appears to be falling sharply. It's staggering. In my field, take the price of paper. A year ago, paper cost four hundred zlotys a kilo; now it's ten thousand zlotys. Sure, everything else is going up, too, but not always proportionately. It used to be that paper and printing costs took up thirty per cent of the price of a finished book; now it's sixty per cent. So it's impossible to make a profit. And no one can afford to buy books in any case. Books in Poland are on their way to becoming as expensive as books in the West, while our salaries aren't anywhere near those in the West. When the year started, there were two hundred state-run bookstores in Warsaw, but twenty closed during January, and I expect that thirty more will close in February and March. You say, 'Well, they should just privatize,' but who would want to run a bookstore in this climate? You see it everywhere: yesterday's bookstores are becoming today's money exchanges. In outlying districts, there are suddenly medium-sized towns with no bookstores. And even the libraries are being forced to close."

Mr. Boguta shrugged, and went on. "The same sort of thing is happening all over the cultural field. Cinemas and theatres are empty. *Gazeta*, Solidarity's daily newspaper—the first and most important independent newspaper anywhere in the Eastern bloc—used to publish as many as six hundred thousand copies a day, and every single one of them was sold by midmorning, at the latest. Now, with the increased cost of paper, they've had to double their newsstand price and cut their production run back to three hundred and fifty thousand, and even so you'll find unsold copies piled at the newsstands late into the evening. People mill around, poking at the pile, debating with themselves whether to buy a copy."

As Mr. Boguta spoke, we recalled that it was precisely through their independent newspapers and publishing houses and theatres and galleries—through their alternative culture—that the Poles had managed to sustain their identity through all the years of state oppression. And yet their culture, according to Boguta, is what they are now on the verge of losing. We were reminded of a comment that the Polish writer Ryszard Kapuscinski made to us last summer. "You watch," he said. "Poland will now begin to look more and more like Latin America." And that memory triggered another: of the Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, complaining recently that in the old days Montevideans used to buy four or five times as many books as they do today. "Then came the dictatorship, with its terrifying censors," he said. "Eventually, we regained our democracy. But now what the censor forbade is forbidden by price."

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The Phil Thrill

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pennsylvania, is the only place in the country where the second of February is the biggest holiday of the year and the only place we know of where, if February 2nd happens to be your birthday, you can stand on a hillside at dawn and hear several hundred complete strangers singing "Happy Birthday." After singing, they begin chanting "We want Phil!" and they do that because Punxsutawney is the One True Weather Capital of the World, being host to the Seer of Seers, the Great Prognosticator, the Fearless Forecaster, who on this day emerges from his official burrow to see—or not to see—his shadow: Punxsutawney Phil.

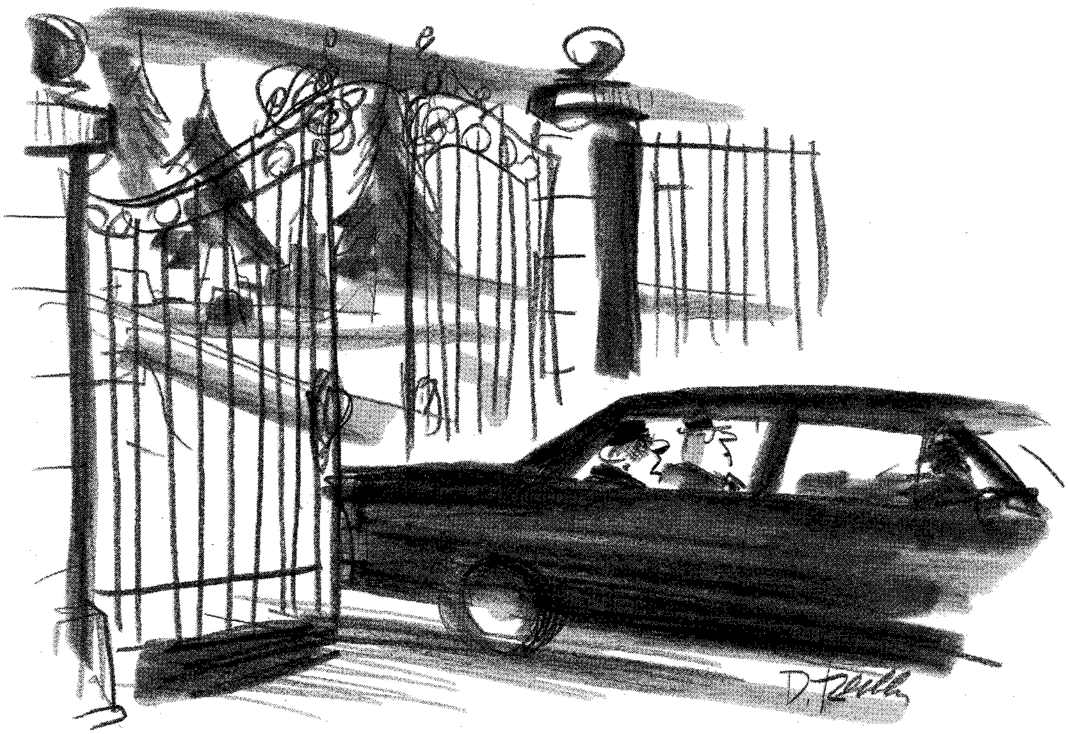
Like any official, Phil, a burly gold-brown groundhog, relies heavily on a support staff; his consists of the gentlemen of the Inner Circle of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club, who, in tuxedos and top hats, mount the steps of Gobbler's Knob at first light on the second, introduce honored guests and invited dignitaries, and keep the crowd from rushing the Knob, a specially designed stump in which Phil prepares to greet the dawn. They also spring the doors to the Knob's inner sanctum and, in a burst of fresh sawdust, extract Phil—after he gives his ritual display of reluctance—and it is they who announce his decision to the media and the world.

Fortunately for Phil, they are gentler descendants of the gang who founded the local tradition. According to a recent article in *Smithsonian* on the groundhog (also known as the woodchuck or whistle-pig), Punxsutawney was first gripped by groundhog fever in 1886, when "six Punxsutawney good ol' boys," driven half mad by the tedium of the long Pennsylvania winter, ran off into the hills with grub hoes and gallons of hard liquor, "dug up several groundhogs, whacked them on the head, skinned them, and fricasseed the better pieces over a campfire." This anarchic hunt eventually hardened into a semi-official lynch mob, which can be seen in a black-and-white photograph from 1948 on display in the local museum. The photograph, labelled "Punxsutawney Groundhog Club Outing," shows a dozen men, hats tipped back, ties loosened, beers in hand, leering at a groundhog that is being held up by the tail while a figure in the foreground fingers a hatchet.

A town ninety miles northeast of Pittsburgh, Punxsutawney got its name from some vicious biting insects that the Delaware Indians called "ponkis" and the colonists called punkies. Ponkis Utenink, or Land of the Punkies, eventually became Punxsutawney, and in the eighteen-eighties the town was famous for what a photographer in the local museum has labelled "The Longest String of Coke Ovens in the World." The museum also shows that Punxsutawney was the kind of place where European-immigrant coal miners used to be admonished with signs that said, in six languages, "A MINER LOADING DIRTY COAL IS DISLOYAL—DO YOUR DUTY AND LOAD CLEAN COAL," and where on January 16, 1891, one girl advised another, in her autograph album, "Dear Elsie, When you get married, and your husband gets cross, just come to my house and eat applesauce."

This year, as in the past, high-school kids drove up to the Knob on the eve of the second of February and stayed up drinking beer; mothers baked dozens of cookies called Spicy Groundhogs and pulled on commemorative sweatshirts ("The Phil Thrill—1989"); fathers who had seen a few too many Groundhog Days got well lit in the Coachlight Bar; and the members of the Inner Circle—Bud Dunkel, official handler; Edwin Snyder, county judge and official announcer; Jim Means, Groundhog Club president—donned tuxedos and top hats. After the ceremony, the annual Groundhog Breakfast took place at the Punxsutawney Country Club, and there a radio announcer from Philadelphia's WMGK-FM 103 asked a fifty-nine-year-old man called Bob, who was celebrating his birthday, for his impressions. "It surprised me, the size of the groundhog," Bob said. "It's a big animal!"

Phil's size *is* surprising, and so is the way he flattens out on Jim Means' shoulder as people press up to pat him



“Well, so much for oat bran.”

and have their picture taken standing next to him. A man behind us in the crowd said, “Didn’t even bite him this year. Two years ago, he bit him.” This year, under completely overcast skies and in a gentle rain, Phil felt a rare optimism, and the crowd hushed as Judge Snyder made the announcement: “Faithful followers of Punxsutawney Phil . . . at approximately 7:27 A.M. on the second of February, 1990, the Seer of Seers and Prognosticator of Prognosticators, Punxsutawney Phil, emerged from his burrow. He stood proud, tall, and confident, surveyed the throng of loyal followers, peered skyward toward the east and then fixed his eyes groundward. He turned to Groundhog Club President Jim Means and signalled to him in unmistakable groundhogese, ‘There is no shadow today.’ ” Members of the Inner Circle then produced two signs—an orange one reading “WARMER WEATHER TO COME,” and a green one announcing “EARLY SPRING.”

Wisdom and Force

THE other day, Bert Aldham was telling us over the phone how to find his place of work. “You can’t miss it,” he said. “It looks like a courthouse.” Mr. Aldham is the Executive Assistant to the Clerk of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, First Judicial Department, which occupies a building that is like a courthouse the way a Fabergé egg is like an egg. The court stands at the northeast corner of Twenty-fifth Street and Madison Avenue, across from Madison Square. On the other side of Twenty-fifth Street is the soaring Art Deco-era Metropolitan Life building, with a bell in its tower which tolls the hours for the neighborhood. The court building is a Palladian-style temple, with Corinthian columns on two sides and elaborately carved balustrades. The façade, adorned by extensive statuary, is carved of moon-pale Alabama Madre marble and bears no obvious traces of having ever been touched by graffiti. To enter, you mount the steps on Twenty-fifth Street, between statues of Wisdom (“Every law not based on wisdom is a menace to the state”) and Force (“We must not use force till just laws are defied”). We did so the other day, and took a seat in the lobby to wait for Mr. Aldham. Around us, attorneys were gathering, and the sound of opened briefcases being snapped shut reverberated through the room like the chirp of crickets.

Mr. Aldham, an impeccably groomed and soberly dressed man, knows almost everything there is to know about this building, and he debriefs himself steadily, speaking at about thirty-five miles per hour. Thanks to him and to an informative pamphlet he gave us, we learned that the courthouse, built at the end of the last century, was planned inside and out by the architect James Brown Lord. To erect this marble edifice then cost New York a total of $422,468. The marble statues, which include a few by such well-known sculptors as Daniel Chester French, cost $157,000. The extensive murals throughout, depicting winged angels, veiled maidens, berobed sages, and wondering putti in allegorical tableaux with titles like “Transmission of the Law” and “Perspicuity,” cost $54,300; that is, the art on the walls and the façade accounted for roughly a third of the cost of the entire construction. (For the bottom-line cost of $633,768 you could probably find a three-bedroom apartment somewhere near Madison Square today.) The court functions almost entirely for the justices—there are thirteen—who hear the cases brought there and for the lawyers who come to deliver their oral arguments. Clients rarely appear, Mr. Aldham said, and, although the public may observe the court proceedings, few people do. Yet, because of the appellate district the court serves—Manhattan and the Bronx—many of the cases on appeal address issues of international interest. Lots of appeals from Wall Street end up here, for instance, and so did the case involving the question of whether the America’s Cup should pass from the United States to New Zealand. “The courtroom was full for that,” Mr. Aldham said. “It was the first time we had allowed television cameras in.”

Mr. Aldham showed us into the courtroom. They don’t build them like that anymore. The bench for the justices—five sit on a case—on the west wall, is made of a heavy, dark wood so intricately carved it looks ecclesiastical. The walls of the room are carved marble. The ceiling is a dome of elaborately designed stained glass. The lawyers sit in carved chairs with leather seats and backs. Over the chief justice's chair is a pretty wooden Tiffany clock that reads one o'clock twenty-four hours a day. At first, we thought that that was to commemorate the opening of the courthouse, at 1 P.M. on January 2, 1900, but Mr. Aldham said no, the clock had broken so many times that it could no longer be fixed. We noticed that a few of the lawyers' chairs were scuffed. "We're hoping that the city will renovate the courtroom," Mr. Aldham said. "We have a leak in the dome, and we'd like to restore the Siena marble on the walls here. All this is the original furniture, but it's getting a little worn. We have no humidity control, and it's starting to crack."

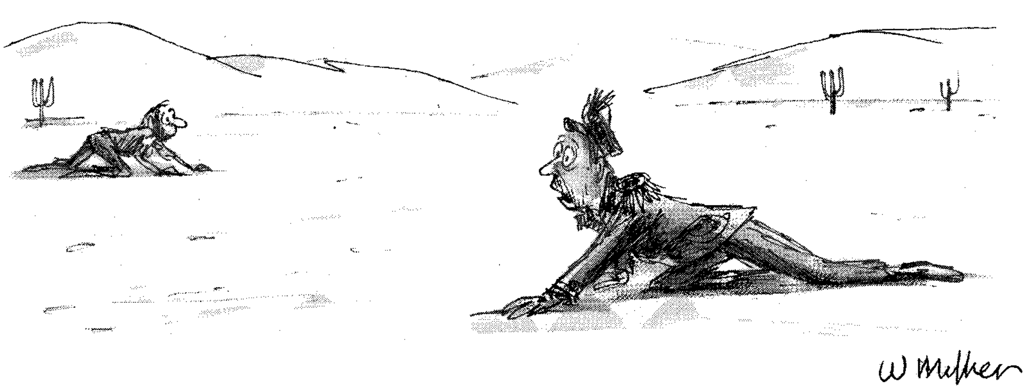
A sudden loud, sonorous chime startled us. "That's from Metropolitan Life," Mr. Aldham said. A door opened behind the bench, and the justices filed in and sat down. "Round One," a court officer muttered in a corner. A score of attorneys had already arrived. The justices interviewed each attorney to determine how long he intended to speak. Time seemed very important to everyone. "We are going to be here for five hours, and any assistance you can give us would be appreciated," one of the justices told the attorneys. Mr. Aldham explained to us that in the old days each side would have an hour to speak, but now the court handles so many cases that speaking time has been limited to fifteen minutes, and a system of white warning lights and red stoplights on the lectern informs each speaker when his time is up. "We can't throw someone out for speaking a few minutes overtime, though," Mr. Aldham added.

We sat through two sets of oral arguments—for the plaintiff's side and for the defendant's side in two cases. The first had something to do with the federal income tax. We heard: "Your Honor, this case began ten years ago this month" and "Millions of dollars of unclaimed income-tax refunds . . ." and "The federal government has exceeded its powers to act and attempted to grab millions of dollars" and "The state is not a person." We noticed that many of the attorneys waiting their turn were studying the courtroom—twisting around to ponder the murals of lovely maidens and frolicking children, or craning their necks to read the names of famous past justices worked into the stained-glass dome. We figured out that the apex of the dome was so high that it would take the five justices balancing on each other's shoulders to reach it. We thought of the last time we had seen five people stand that way, at the Moscow Circus. Before we knew it, the arguments had started for Case No. 2.

This case was coming up to the justices from family court, and after the first few sentences the lawyers settled stonily into their seats and stared straight ahead. One opened his mouth slightly and kept it open for the duration of the arguments. Another pulled at his glasses and kept touching one eye. We heard: "The Columbia Presbyterian Hospital tested the child for gonorrhea" and "Did both parents abuse the child?" and "The therapy helped me fully come to grips. I submit a copy of the Father's Day card I received." We looked around at the murals again and realized how many of the little children in them were naked.

When the lawyers had presented their arguments in this case, Mr. Aldham led us out of the courtroom into an adjacent historic space, with wood-panelled stalls. As he explained to us that the hooks, which were oversized and high up, dated from the days when attorneys wore formal dress and top hats to court, we saw the lawyer for the plaintiff in the second case. We asked her what she thought of the building. "It's the most beautiful courthouse in the city," she said. "The acoustics are pretty good, too. The judges can actually hear what you say."

Mr. Aldham started to explain that some brass loops in the stalls were where the gentlemen attorneys of yore stored their walking sticks. But when he leaned over to point out a loop he discovered that it was missing. The lawyer finished buttoning her mackintosh and heaved up her laden briefcase. "Not like the good old days," she said.

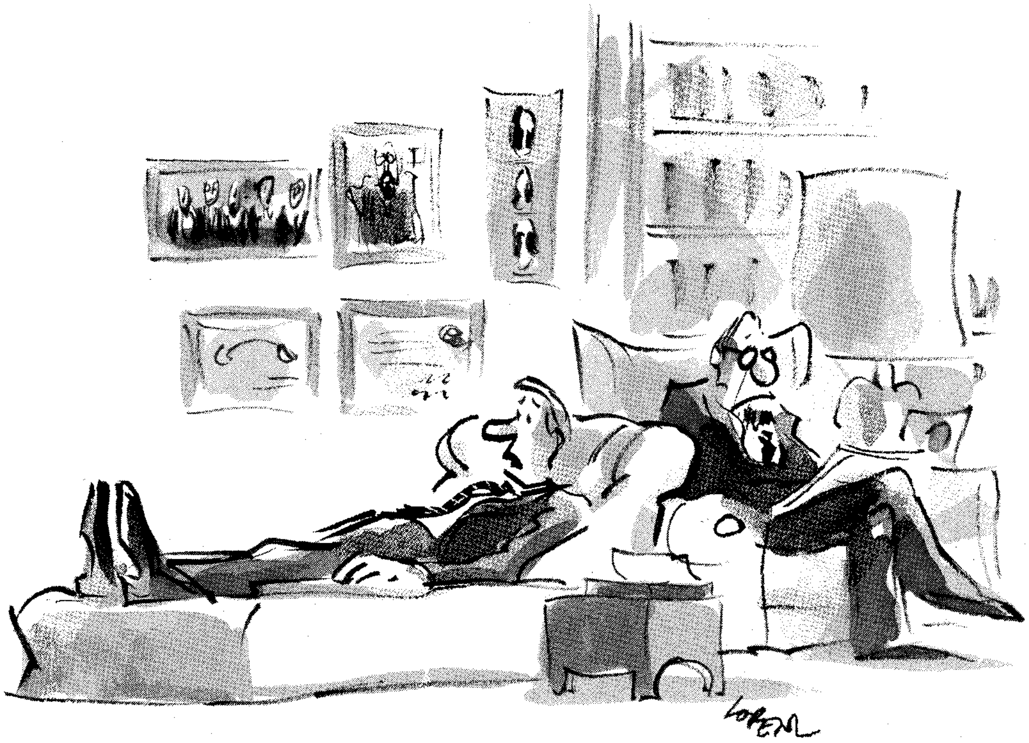


W Miller

"Power! Power!"

Sounds

FOR roughly the length of time between the moment when Diana Ross and the Supremes recorded the initial "Wooo!" in "Love Is like an Itchin' in My Heart" and the moment when Janet Jackson recorded the initial "Oooo" in "What Have You Done for Me Lately?" Joe Long has been selling records—and not just records but *sounds*. To listen to those sounds, all you have to do is take the A train to Nostrand Avenue, in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. As soon as you're aboveground, you'll hear them issuing from a P.A. system outside Birdel's, Mr. Long's record store. The sounds vary greatly during the day, but Mr. Long always begins with gospel, because, he says, that's the sound that focusses and anchors him. Other than the sounds, nothing much at Birdel's Records changes—not the red-and-green neon sign out front (two of the letters don't light, so it spells “ CORDS”); not the storefront's windows, with loopy stencilled script reading “ ‘We Specialize in’ Oldies ‘But’ Goodies”; not the store's interior, with wooden racks of empty album covers in dusty cellophane jackets, a large number of autographed photographs on the walls (“Birdel's Thanks for the support. Bow legged Lou—Full Force”), and an even larger number of bright-colored posters hanging here and there; and not Mr. Long himself.



“Nobody cares whether I drink Coke or Pepsi.”

Mr. Long's name suits him well. A brown-skinned man of fifty-two, he's tall and angular. Dressed usually in a white sweatshirt with the legend “Crack a Bible. Jesus Loves You. And So Do We” on the front, he stands, slightly stooped, behind the store's main counter, which is sandwiched between two turntables. If you can't remember the title of a song, or its singer, and can just barely hum the tune, more often than not Mr. Long will nod after a few bars of what you do remember, and will play what you want to hear. That sound is automatically broadcast over the P.A. system outside. Mr. Long believes in making memory collective.

The other day, he told a customer who was browsing but not buying, “Birdel's got started around 1944. Benjamin Steiner was the founder, and he started the tradition of playing records for customers—something I've continued, and something most music sellers don't do anymore, if they ever did. It's sad to see the way music is packaged. Compact disks—forget about it. Who can read the lyrics? Steiner named the shop Birdel's by combining his wife's name, Birdie, and his daughter's, Delli. I used to go to his shop every Wednesday, when I got paid. Birdel's has always been busy—there have always been kids dancing here and hanging out. In the old days, Steiner didn't close the gate until midnight. I spent so much time here, having so much fun, that Steiner offered me a job as his assistant—an after-my-other-job job—so I could support my musical habit.”

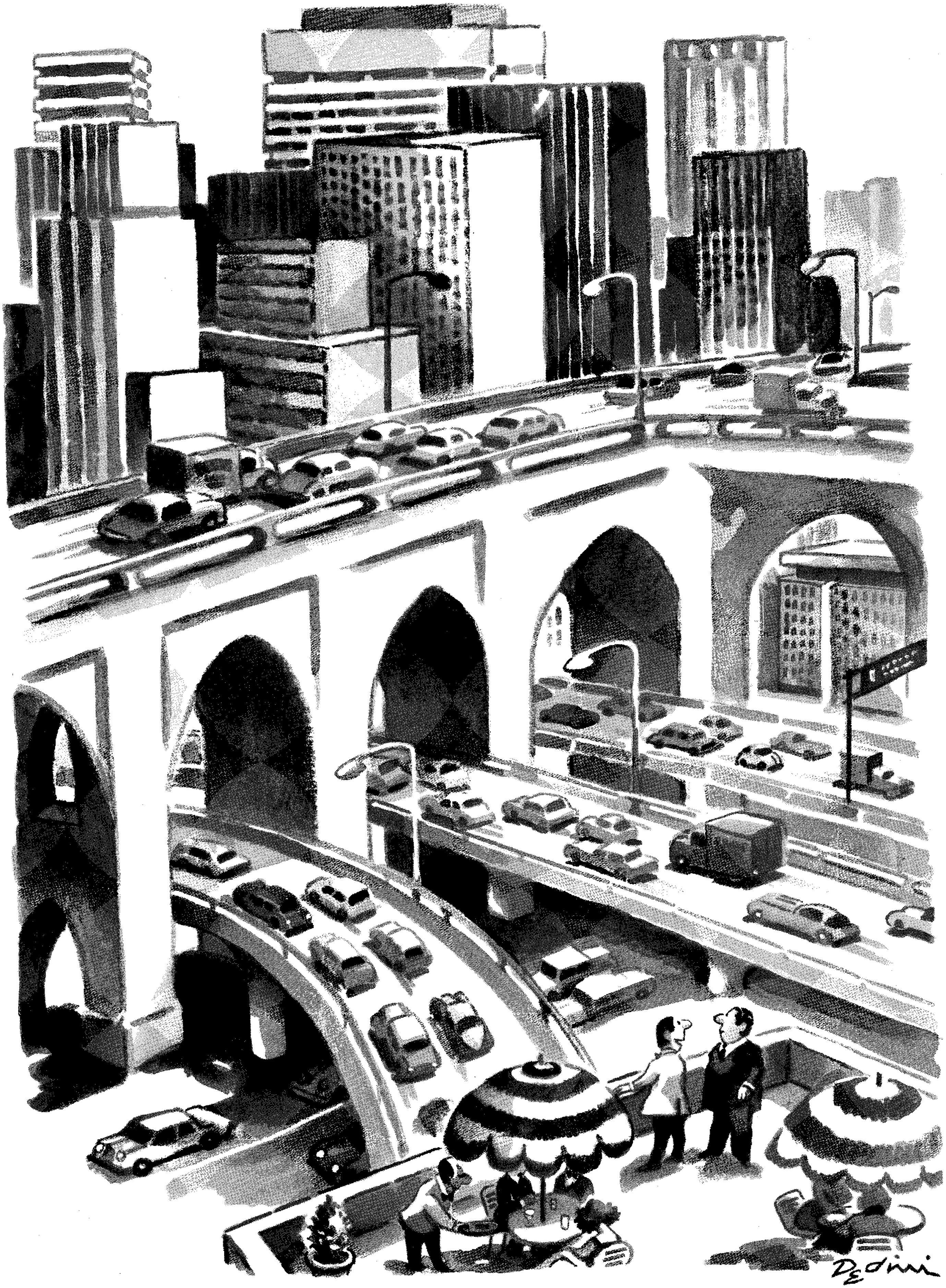
Mr. Long excused himself to wait on a distinguished-looking older man who was standing at the counter. The man said, “They say you from North Carolina, too. If I say I am, will you give me a discount? Good. I want to hear something by Bobby Bland. None of this baby-face stuff—I can't stand that kind of singing. I don't remember the name of the song, but I can tap it.”

After the man tapped out the tempo of what he remembered, Mr. Long said, “ ‘Take off Your Shoes’ is what you want to hear.” He put the record on and turned up the volume.

Within a few beats, the man's face began to show recognition. “That's it,” he said several times as he watched the record spin. “That's an all-right beat—something I can listen to every day, not like that baby-face singing.” He bought the record and left.

“Where was I?” Mr. Long said to the browsing customer. “Oh, Steiner. He retired in '68, and I bought the place. By then, I knew a lot more about music as a business—the part I'm least interested in. I learned about what they call demographics by phoning radio stations—learning what was coming up for the kids. We sell soul, blues, rap, jazz—black sounds for everyone—and sometimes a little country and Western. The kids still come in here, the way they always have, to listen, and their parents come in after their kids, to listen to the blues. I love Birdel's being in the community's service. For Black History Month, I'm trying to get a Black Expo together, with artists like Roy ‘C.’ and Jack and Jill—to give a little something back to the community. It's a lot to do, but it's doable. That was my daddy's motto—he drew breath on this earth for one hundred and two years. I love it that sounds are not a nine-to-five thing. I like it that they're about involvement.”

Sounds, Mr. Long will point out in the course of a conversation, are not just a musical experience. On Martin Luther King Day, for instance, he plays Dr. King's speeches over the P.A., he says, and on that day people stop outside the shop to listen. No one seems to have any trouble identifying the voice, especially in that speech where it hits the word “dream” over and over again, like a refrain.



"*Hard to believe this was all rain forest just fifteen years ago.*"

THE BINGO VAN

WHEN I walked into bingo that night in early spring, I didn't have a girlfriend, a home or an apartment, a piece of land or a car, and I wasn't tattooed yet, either. Now look at me. I'm walking the reservation road in borrowed pants, toward a place that isn't mine, downhearted because I'm left by a woman. All I have of my temporary riches is this black pony running across the back of my hand—a tattoo I had Lewey's Tattoo Den put there on account of a waking dream. I'm still not paid up. I still owe for the little horse. But if Lewey wants to repossess it, then he'll have to catch me first.

Here's how it is on coming to the bingo hall. It's a long, low quonset barn. Inside, there used to be a pall of smoke, but now the smoke-eater fans in the ceiling take care of that. So upon first entering you can pick out your friends. On that night in early spring, I saw Eber, Clay, and Robert Morrissey sitting about halfway up toward the curtained stage with their grandmother Lulu. By another marriage, she was my grandma, too. She had five tickets spread in front of her. The boys each had only one. When the numbers rolled, she picked up a dabber in each hand. It was the Earlybird game, a one-hundred-dollar prize, and nobody had got too wound up yet or serious.

"Lipsha, go get us a Coke," said Lulu when someone else bingoed. "Yourself, too."

I went to the concession with Eber, who had finished high school with me. Clay and Robert were younger. We got our soft drinks and came back, set them down, pulled up to the table, and laid out a new set of tickets before us. Like I say, my grandmother, she played five at once, which is how you get the big money. In the long run, much more than breaking even, she was one of those rare Chippewas who actually profited by bingo. But, then again, it was her only way of gambling. No pull-tabs, no blackjack, no slot machines for her. She never went into the back room. She banked all the cash she won. I thought I should learn from Lulu Lamartine, whose other grandsons had stiff new boots while mine were worn down into the soft shape of moccasins. I watched her.

Concentration. Before the numbers even started, she set her mouth, snapped her purse shut. She shook her dabbers so that the foam-rubber tips were thoroughly inked. She looked at the time on her watch. The Coke, she took a drink of that, but no more than a sip. She was a narrow-eyed woman with a round jaw, curled hair. Her eyeglasses, blue plastic, hung from her neck by a gleaming chain. She raised the ovals to her eyes as the caller took the stand. She held her dabbers poised while he plucked the ball from the chute. He read it out: B-7. Then she was absorbed, scanning, dabbing, into the game. She didn't mutter. She had no lucky piece to touch in front of her. And afterward, even if she lost a blackout game by one square, she never sighed or complained.

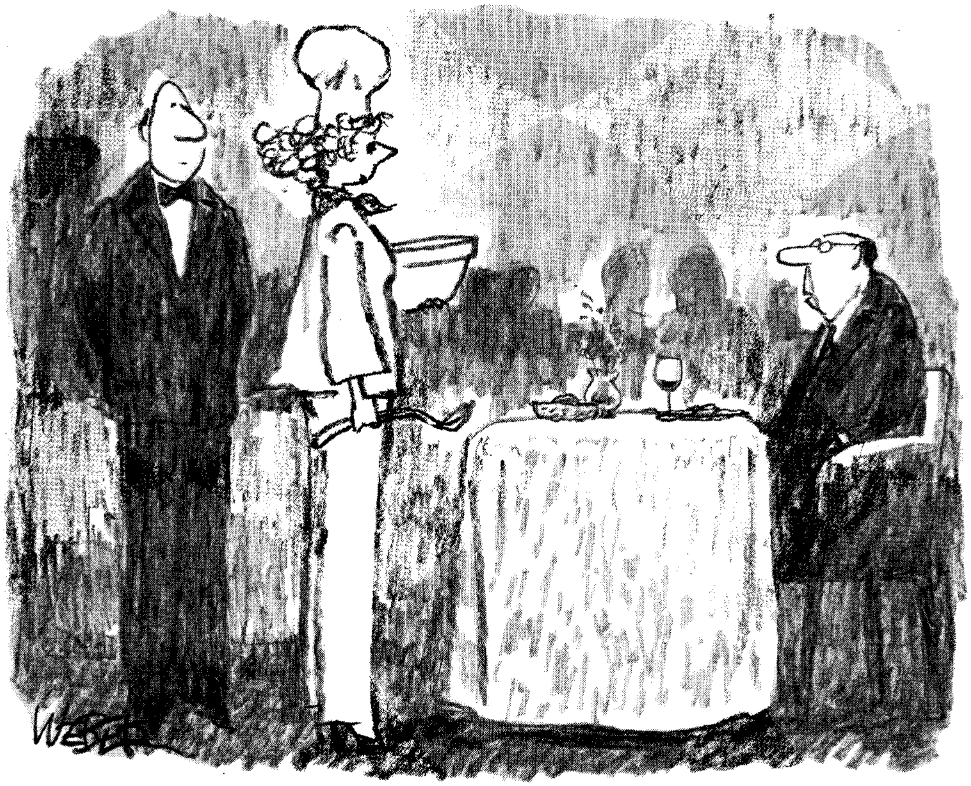
All business, that was Lulu. And all business paid.

I think I would have been all business too, like her, if it hadn't been for what lay behind the stage curtain to be revealed. I didn't know it, but that was what would change the order of my life. Because of the van, I'd have to get stupid first, then wise. You see, I had been floundering since high school, trying to catch my bearings in the world. It all lay ahead of me, spread out in the sun like a giveaway at a naming ceremony. Only thing was, I could not choose a prize. Something always stopped my hand before it reached.

"Lipsha Morrissey, you got to go for a vocation." That's what I told myself, in a state of nervous worry. I was getting by on almost no money, relying on my job as night watchman in a bar. That earned me a place to sleep, twenty dollars per week, and as much beef jerky, Beer Nuts, and spicy sausage sticks as I could eat.

I was now composed of these three false substances. No food in a bar has a shelf life of less than forty months. If you are what you eat, I would live forever, I thought.

And then they pulled aside the curtain, and I saw that I wouldn't live as long as I had coming unless I owned that van. It had every option you could believe—blue plush on the steering wheel, diamond side windows, and complete carpeted interior. The seats were easy chairs, with little headphones, and it was wired all through the walls. You could walk up close during intermission and touch the sides. The paint was cream, except for the design picked out in blue, which



"You're the chef? Well, my compliments anyway."

164 EAST 72ND STREET

These city apartment windows—my grandmother's once—
Must be replaced come fall at great expense.
Prewar sun shone through them on many a Saturday
Lunch unconsumed while frantic adolescence
Wheedled an old lady into hat and lipstick,
Into her mink, the taxi, the packed lobby,
Into our seats. Whereupon gold curtains parted
On Lakmé's silvery, not yet brokenhearted

Version of things as they were. But what remains
Exactly as it was except these panes?
Today's memo from the Tenants' Committee deplores
Even the ongoing deterioration
Of the *widows* in our building. Well. On the bright side,
Heating costs and street noise will be cut.
Sirens at present like intergalactic gay
Bars in full swing whoop past us night and day.

Sometimes, shocked wide awake, I've tried to reckon
How many lives—fifty, a hundred thousand?—
Are being shortened by that din of crosstown
Ruby flares, wherever blinds don't quite . . .
And shortened by how much? Ten minutes each?
Reaching the emergency room alive, the victim
Would still have to live *years*, just to repair
The sonic fallout of a single scare.

"Do you ever wonder where you'll—" Oh my dear,
Asleep somewhere, or at the wheel. Not here.
Within months of the bathroom ceiling's cave-in,
Which missed my grandmother by a white hair,
She moved back South. The point's to live in style,
Not to drop dead in it. On a carpet of flowers
Nine levels above ground, like Purgatory,
Our life is turning into a whole new story:

Juices, blue cornbread, afternoons at the gym—
Imagine who remembers how to swim!
Evenings of study, and intensive care
For one another. Early to bed. And later,
If the mirror's drowsy eye perceives a slight
But brilliant altercation between curtains
Healed by the leaden hand of—one of us?
A white-haired ghost? Or the homunculus

A gentle alchemist behind them trains
To put in order these nocturnal scenes—
Two heads already featureless in gloom
Have fallen back to sleep. Tomorrow finds me
Contentedly playing peekaboo with a sylphlike
Quirk in the old glass, making the brickwork
On the street's far (bright) side ripple. Childhood's view.
My grandmother—an easy-to-see-through

Widow by the time she died—made it my own.
Bless her good sense. Far from those parts of town
Given to high finance, or the smash hit and steak house,
Macy's or crack, Saks or quick sex, this neighborhood
Saunters blandly forth, adjusting its clothing.
Things done in purple light before we met,
Uncultured things that twitched as on a slide
If thought about, fade like dreams. Two Upper East Side

Boys again! Rereading Sir Walter Scott
Or "Through the Looking Glass," it's impossible not
To feel how adult life, with its storms and follies,
Is letting up, leaving me ten years old,
Trustful, inventive, once more good as gold
—And counting on this to help, should a new spasm
Wake the gray sleeper, or to improve his chances
When ceilings flush with unheard ambulances.

—James Merrill

• •

was a Sioux Drum border. In the back there was a small refrigerator and a carpeted platform for sleeping. It was a home, a portable den with front-wheel drive. I could see myself in it right off. I could see I *was* it.

On TV, they say you are what you drive. Let's put it this way: I wanted to be that van.

Now, I know that what I felt was a symptom of the national decline. You'll scoff at me, scorn me, say, What right does that waste Lipsha Morrissey, who makes his living guarding beer, have to comment outside of his own tribal boundary? But I was able to investigate the larger picture, thanks to Grandma Lulu, from whom I learned to be one-minded in my pursuit of a material object.

I went night after night to the bingo. Every hour I spent there, I grew more certain I was close. There was only one game per night at which the van was offered, a blackout game, where you had to fill every slot. The more tickets you bought, the more your chances increased. I tried to play five tickets, like Grandma Lulu did, but they cost five bucks each. To get my van, I had to shake hands with greed. I got unprincipled.

You see, my one talent in this life is a healing power I get passed down through the Pillager branch of my background. It's in my hands. I snap my fingers together so hard they almost spark. Then I blank out my mind, and I put on the touch. I had a reputation up to then for curing sore joints and veins. I could relieve ailments caused in an old person by a half century of grinding stoop-over work. I had a power in myself that flowed out, resistless. I had a richness in my dreams and waking thoughts. But I never realized I would have to give up my healing source once I started charging for my service.

You know how it is about charging. People suddenly think you are worth something. Used to be, I'd go anyplace I was called, take any price or take nothing. Once I let it get around that I charged a twenty for my basic work, however, the phone at the bar rang off the hook.

"Where's that medicine boy?" they asked. "Where's Lipsha?"

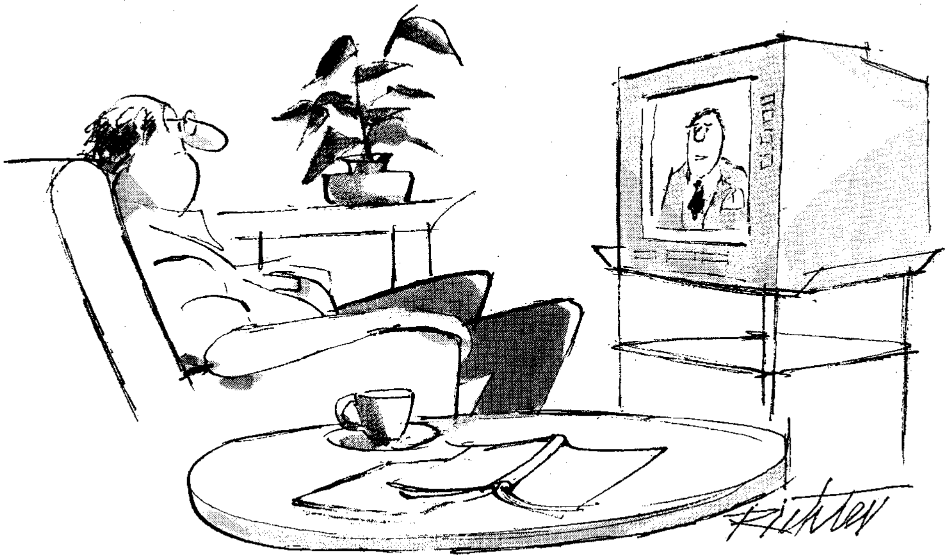
I took their money. And it's not like beneath the pressure of a twenty I didn't try, for I did try, even harder than before. I skipped my palms together, snapped my fingers, positioned them where the touch inhabiting them should flow. But when it came to blanking out my mind I consistently failed. For each time, in the center of the cloud that came down into my brain, the van was now parked, in perfect focus.

I suppose I longed for it like for a woman, except I wasn't that bad yet, and, anyway, then I did meet a woman, which set me back in my quest.

Instead of going for the van with everything, saving up to buy as many cards as I could play when they got to the special game, for a few nights I went short term, for variety, with U-Pickem cards, the kind where you have to choose the numbers for yourself.

First off, I wrote in the shoe and pants sizes of those Morrissey boys. No luck. So much for them. Next I took my birth date and a double of it—still no go. I wrote down the numbers of my grandma's address and her anniversary dates. Nothing. Then one night I realized if my U-Pickem was going to win it would be more like *revealed*, rather than a forced kind of thing. So I shut my eyes, right there in the middle of the long bingo table, and I let my mind blank out, white and fizzing like the screen of a television, until something formed. The van, as always. But on its tail this time a license plate was officially fixed and numbered. I used that number, wrote it down in the boxes, and then I bingoed.

I GOT two hundred dollars from that imaginary license. The money was in my pocket when I left. The next morning, I had fifty cents. But it's not like you think with Serena, and I'll explain that. She didn't want something from me; she didn't care if I had money, and she didn't ask for it. She was seventeen and had a two-year-old boy. That tells you about her life. Her last name was American Horse, an old Sioux name she was proud of even though it was strange to Chippewa country. At her older sister's house Serena's little boy blended in with the younger children, and Serena herself was just one of the teen-agers. She was still in high school, a year behind the year she should have been in, and she had ambitions. Her idea was to go into business and sell her clothing designs, of which she had six books.



"And today in Washington a top Administration apologist issued an apology while denying that there was anything to apologize for."

• •

I don't know how I got a girl so decided in her future to go with me, even that night. Except I told myself, "Lipsha, you're a nice-looking guy. You're a winner." And for the moment I was. I went right up to her at the Coin-Op and said, "Care to dance?," which was a joke—there wasn't anyplace to dance. Yet she liked me. We had a sandwich and then she wanted to take a drive, so we tagged along with some others in the back of their car. They went straight south, toward Hoopdance, off the reservation, where action was taking place.

"Lipsha," she whispered on the way, "I always liked you from a distance."

"Serena," I said, "I liked you from a distance, too."

So then we moved close together on the car seat. My hand was on my knee, and I thought of a couple of different ways I could gesture, casually pretend to let it fall on hers, how maybe if I talked fast she wouldn't notice, in the heat of the moment, her hand in my hand, us holding hands, our lips drawn to one another. But then I decided to boldly take courage, to take her hand as, at the same time, I looked into her eyes. I did this. In the front, the others talked among themselves. Yet we just sat there. After a while she said, "You want to kiss me?"

But I answered, not planning how the words would come out, "Our first kiss has to be a magic moment only we can share."

Her eyes went wide as a deer's, and her big smile bloomed. Her skin was dark, her long hair a burnt-brown color. She wore no jewelry, no rings, just the clothing she had sewed from her designs—a suit jacket and pair of pants that were the tan of eggshells, with symbols picked out in blue thread on the borders, the cuffs, and the hem. I took her in, admiring, for some time on that drive before I realized that the reason Serena's cute outfit nagged me so was on account of she was dressed up to match my bingo van. I could hardly tell her this surprising coincidence, but it did convince me that the time was perfect, the time was right.

They let us off at a certain place just over the reservation line, and we got out, hardly breaking our gaze from each other. You want to know what this place was? I'll tell you. O.K. So it was a motel—a long, low double row of rooms, painted white on the outside, with brown wooden doors. There was a beautiful sign set up, featuring a lake with some fish jumping out of it. We stood beside the painted water.

"I haven't done this since Jason," she said. That was the name of her two-year-old son. "I have to call up my sister first."

There was a phone near the office,

inside a plastic shell. She went over there.

"He's sleeping," she said when she returned.

I went into the office, stood before the metal counter. There was a number floating in my mind.

"Is Room 22 available?" I asked.

I suppose, looking at me, I look too much like an Indian. The owner, a big sandy-haired woman in a shiny black blouse, noticed that. You get so you see it cross their face the way wind blows a disturbance on water. There was a period of contemplation, a struggle in this woman's thinking. Behind her the television whispered. Her mouth opened, but I spoke first.

"This here is Andrew Jackson," I said, tenderizing the bill. "Known for setting up our Southern relatives for the Trail of Tears. And to keep him company we got two Mr. Hamiltons."

The woman turned shrewd, and took the bills.

"No parties." She held out a key attached to a square of orange plastic.

"Just sex." I could not help but reassure her. But that was talk, big talk from a person with hardly any experience and nothing that resembled a birth-control device. I wasn't one of those so-called studs who couldn't open up their wallets without dropping a foil-wrapped square. No, Lipsha Morrissey was deep at heart a romantic, a wild-minded kind of guy, I told myself, a fool with no letup. I went out to Serena, and took her hand in mine. I was shaking inside but my voice was steady and my hands were cool.

"Let's go in." I showed the key. "Let's not think about tomorrow."

"That's how I got Jason," said Serena.

So we stood there.

"I'll go in," she said at last. "Down two blocks, there's an all-night gas station. They sell 'em."

I went. O.K. Life in this day and age might be less romantic in some ways. It seemed so in the hard twenty-four-hour fluorescent light, as I tried to choose what I needed from the rack by the counter. It was quite a display; there were dazzling choices—textures, shapes. I saw I was being watched, and I suddenly grabbed what was near my hand—two boxes, economy size.

"Heavy date?"

I suppose the guy on the late shift was bored, could not resist. His T-shirt said "Big Sky Country." He was grinning in an ugly way. So I answered.

"Not really. Fixing up a bunch of my white buddies from Montana. Trying to keep down the sheep population."

His grin stayed fixed. Maybe he had heard a lot of jokes about Montana blondes, or maybe he was from somewhere else. I looked at the boxes in my hand, put one back.

"Let me help you out," the guy said. "What you need is a bag of these."

He took down a plastic sack of little oblong party balloons, Day-Glo pinks and oranges and blues.

"Too bright," I said. "My girlfriend's a designer. She hates clashing colors." I was breathing hard suddenly, and so was he. Our eyes met and narrowed.

"What does she design?" he said. "Bedsheets?"

"What does yours design?" I said. "Wool sweaters?"

I put money between us. "For your information, my girlfriend's not only beautiful but she and I are the same species."

"Which is?"

"Take the money," I said. "Hand over my change and I'll be out of here. Don't make me do something I'd regret."

"I'd be real threatened." The guy turned from me, ringing up my sale. "I'd be shaking, except I know you Indian guys are chickenshit."

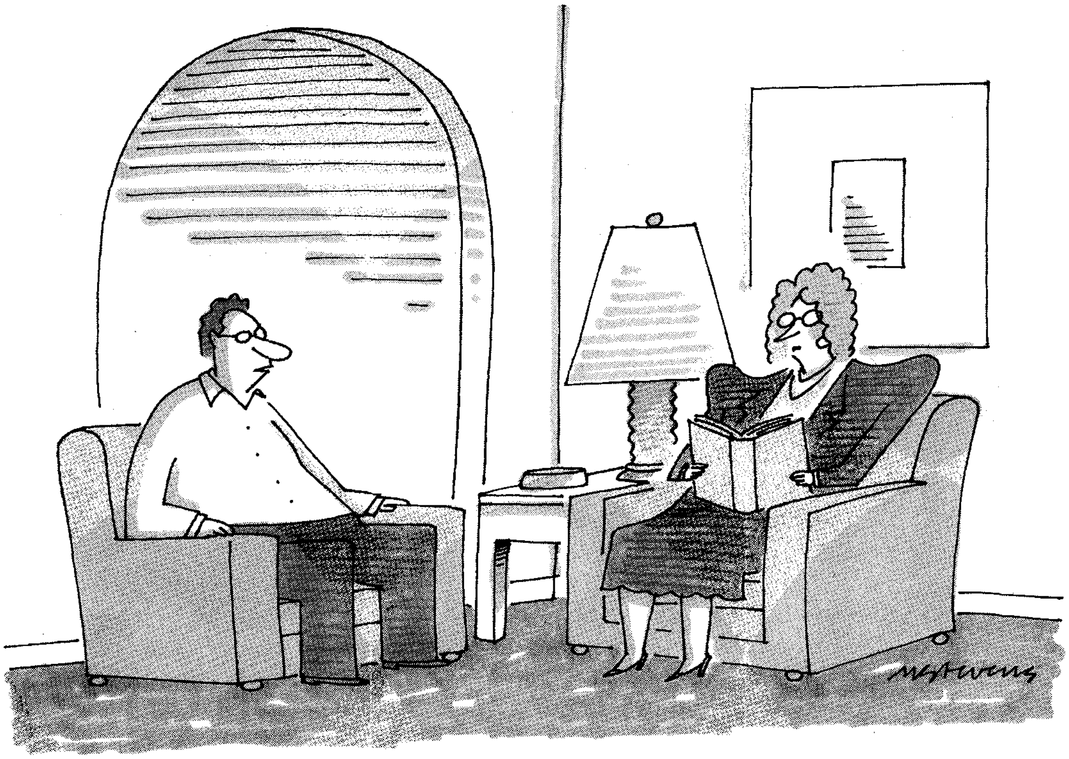
I took my package, took my change.

"Baaaaa," I said, and beat it out of there. It's strange how a bashful kind of person like me gets talkative in some of our less pleasant border-town situations.

I took a roundabout way back to Room 22 and tapped on the door. There was a little window right beside it. Serena peeked through, and let me in.

"Well," I said then, in that awkward interval, "guess we're set."

She took the bag from my hand and didn't say a word, just put it on the little table beside the bed. There were two chairs. Each of us took one. Then we sat down and turned on the television. The romance wasn't in us now for some reason, but there was something invisible that made me

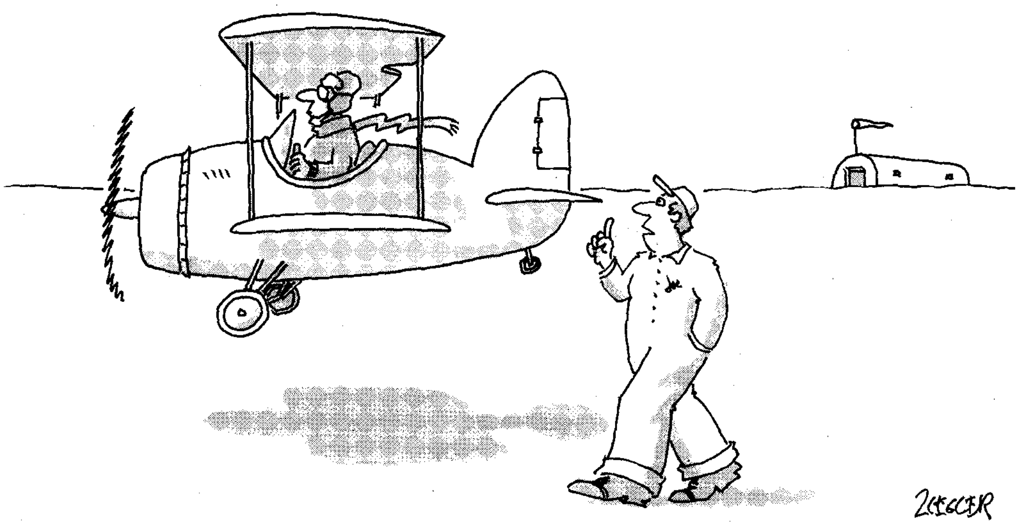


"You're home now, Adele. Why don't you take off your shoulders?"

hopeful about the room.

It was just a small place, a modest kind of place, clean. You could smell the faint chemical of bug spray the moment you stepped inside. You could look at the television hung on the wall, or examine the picture of golden trees and a waterfall. You could take a shower for a long time in the cement shower stall, standing on your personal shower mat for safety. There was a little tin desk. You could sit down there and write a letter on a sheet of plain paper from the drawer. The lampshade was made of reeds, pressed and laced tight together. The spread on the double mattress was reddish, a rusty cotton material. There was an air-conditioner, with a fan we turned on.

"I don't know why we're here," I said at last. "I'm sorry."



"O.K., Mr. Spinelli, you're up. Now bank her to the right, and I'll talk you back in for a nice smooth landing."

• •

Serena took a small brush from her purse.

"Comb my hair?"

I took the brush and sat on the bed, just behind her. I began at the ends, very careful, but there were hardly any tangles to begin with. Her hair was a quiet brown without variation. My hand followed the brush, smoothing after each stroke, until the fall of her hair was a hypnotizing silk. I could lift my hand away from her head and the hair would follow, electric to my touch, in soft strands that hung suspended until I returned to the brushing. She never moved, except to switch off the light and then the television. She sat down again in the total dark and said, "Please, keep on," so I did. The air got thick. Her hair got lighter, full of blue static, charged so that I was held in place by the attraction. A golden spark jumped on the carpet. Serena turned toward me. Her hair floated down around her at that moment like a tent of energy.

WELL, the money part is not related to that. I gave it all to Serena, that's true. Her intention was to buy material and put together the creations that she drew in her notebooks. It was fashion with a Chippewa flair, as she explained it, and sure to win prizes at the state home-ec. contest. She promised to pay me interest when she opened her own shop. The next day, after we had parted, after I had checked out the bar I was supposed to night-watch, I went off to the woods to sit and think. Not about the money, which was Serena's—and good luck to her—but about her and me.

She was two years younger than me, yet she had direction and a child, while I was aimless, lost in hyperspace, using up my talent, which was already fading from my hands. I wondered what our future could hold. One thing was sure: I never knew a man to support his family by playing bingo, and the medicine calls for Lipsha were getting fewer by the week, and fewer, as my touch failed to heal people, fled from me, and lay concealed.

I sat on ground where, years ago, my greats and my great-greats, the Pillagers, had walked. The trees around me were the dense birch and oak of old woods. The lake drifted in, gray waves, white foam in a bobbing lace. Thin gulls lined themselves up on a sandbar. The sky went dark. I closed my eyes, and that is when the little black pony galloped into my mind. It sped across the choppy waves like a skipping stone, its mane a banner, its tail a flag, and vanished on the other side of the shore.

It was luck. Serena's animal. American Horse.

"This is the last night I'm going to try for the van," I told myself. I always kept three twenties stuffed inside the edging of my blanket in back of the bar. Once that stash was gone I'd make a real decision. I'd open the yellow pages at random, and where my finger pointed I would take that kind of job.

Of course, I never counted on winning the van.

I was playing for it on the shaded side of a blackout ticket, which is always hard to get. As usual, I sat with Lulu and her boys. Her vigilance helped me. She let me use her extra dabber and she sat and smoked a filter cigarette, observing the quiet frenzy that was taking place around her. Even though that van had sat on the stage for five months, even though nobody had yet won it and everyone said it was a scam, when it came to playing for it most people bought a couple of tickets. That night, I went all out and purchased eight.

A girl read out the numbers from the hopper. Her voice was clear and light on the microphone. I didn't even notice what was happening—Lulu pointed out one place I had missed on the winning ticket. Then I had just two squares left to make a bingo and I suddenly sweated, I broke out into a chill, I went cold and hot at once. After all my pursuit, after all my plans, I was N-6 and G-60. I had narrowed myself, shrunk into the spaces on the ticket. Each time the girl read a number and it wasn't that 6 or 60 I sickened, recovered, forgot to breathe.

She must have read twenty numbers out before N-6. Then, right after that, G-60 rolled off her lips.

I screamed. I am ashamed to say how loud I yelled. That girl came over, got the manager, and then he checked out my numbers slow and careful while everyone hushed.

He didn't say a word. He checked them over twice. Then he pursed his lips together and wished he didn't have to say it.

"It's a bingo," he finally told the crowd.

Noise buzzed to the ceiling—talk of how close some others had come, green talk—and every eye was turned and cast on me, which was uncomfortable. I never was the center of looks before, not Lipsha, who everybody took for granted around here. Not all those looks were for the good, either. Some were plain envious and ready to believe the first bad thing a sour tongue could pin on me. It made sense in a way. Of all those who'd stalked that bingo van over the long months, I was now the only one who had not lost money on the hope.

O.K., so what kind of man does it make Lipsha Morrissey that the keys did not tarnish his hands one slight degree, and that he beat it out that very night in the van, completing only the basic paperwork? I didn't go after Serena, and I can't tell you why. Yet I was hardly ever happier. In that van, I rode high, but that's the thing. Looking down on others, even if it's only from the seat of a van that a person never really earned, does something to the human mentality. It's hard to say. I changed. After just one evening riding the reservation roads, passing with a swish of my tires, I started smiling at the homemade hot rods, at the clunkers below me, at the old-lady cars nosing carefully up and down the gravel hills.

DISTANCES

The radio is playing downstairs in the kitchen.
The clock says eight and the light says
winter. You are pulling up your hood against a bad morning.

Don't leave, I say. Don't go without telling me
the name of that song. You call it back to me from the stairs—
"I Wish I Was in Carrickfergus"—

and the words open out with emigrant grief the way the streets
of a small town open out in
memory: salt-loving fuchsias to one side and

a market in full swing on the other with
linen for sale and tacky apples and a glass-and-wire hill
of spectacles on a metal tray. The front door bangs

and you're gone. I will think of it all morning while a fine
drizzle closes in, making the distances
fiction: not of that place but of this, and of how

restless we would be, you and I, inside the perfect
music of that basalt-and-sandstone
coastal town. We would walk the streets in

the scentless and flawless afternoon of a ballad measure,
longing to be able
to tell each other that the starched lace and linen of

adult handkerchiefs scraped your face and left your tears
falling, how the apples were mush inside the crisp sugar
shell and the spectacles out of focus.

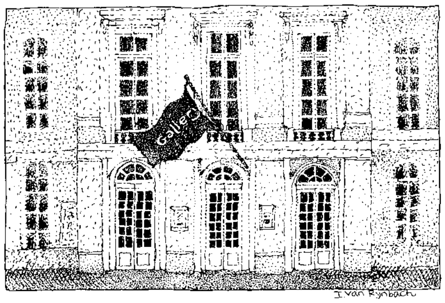
—Eavan Boland

• •

I started saying to myself that I should visit Serena, and a few nights later I finally did go over there. I pulled into her sister's driveway with a flourish I could not help, as the van slipped into a pothole and I roared the engine. For a moment, I sat in the dark, letting my headlamps blaze alongside the door until Serena's brother-in-law leaned out.

"Cut the lights!" he yelled. "We got a sick child."

I rolled down my window, and asked for Serena.



"It's her boy. She's in here with him." He waited. I did, too, in the dark. A dim light was on behind him and I saw some shadows, a small girl in those pajamas with the feet tacked on, someone pacing back and forth.

"You want to come in?" he called.

But here's the gist of it: I just said to tell Serena hi for me, and then I backed out of there, down the drive, and left her to fend for herself. I could have stayed there. I could have drawn my touch back from wherever it had gone to. I could have offered my van to take Jason to the I.H.S. I could have sat there in silence as a dog guards its mate, its own blood. I could have done something different from what I did, which was to hit the road for Hoopdance and look for a better time.

I cruised until I saw where the party house was located that night. I drove the van over the low curb, into the yard, and I parked there. I watched until I recognized a couple of cars and saw the outlines of Indians and mixed, so I knew that walking in would not involve me in what the newspapers term an episode. The door was white, stained and raked by a dog, with a tiny fan-shaped window. I went through and stood inside. There was movement, a kind of low-key swirl of bright hair and dark hair tossing alongside each other. There were about as many Indians as there weren't. This party was what we call around here a Hairy Buffalo, and most people were grouped around a big brown plastic garbage can that served as the punch bowl for the all-purpose stuff, which was anything that anyone brought, dumped in along with pink Hawaiian Punch. I grew up around a lot of the people, and others I knew by sight. Among those last, there was a young familiar-looking guy.

It bothered me. I recognized him, but I didn't know him. I hadn't been to school with him, or played him in any sport, because I did not play sports. I couldn't think where I'd seen him until later, when the heat went up and he took off his bomber jacket. Then "Big Sky Country" showed, plain letters on a bright-blue background.

I edged around the corner of the room, into the hall, and stood there to argue with myself. Would he recognize me, or was I just another face, a customer? He probably wasn't really from Montana, so he might not even have been insulted by our little conversation, or remember it anymore. I reasoned that he had probably picked up the shirt vacationing, though who would want to go across that border, over to where the world got meaner? I told myself that I should calm my nerves, go back into the room, have fun. What kept me from doing that was the sudden thought of Serena, of our night together and what I had bought and used.

Once I remembered, I was lost to the present moment. One part of me caught up with the other. I realized that I had left Serena to face her crisis, alone, while I took off in my brand-new van.

I have a hard time getting drunk. It's just the way I am. I start thinking and forget to fill the cup, or recall something I have got to do, and just end up walking from a party. I have put down a full can of beer before and walked out to weed my grandma's rhubarb patch, or work on a cousin's car. Now I was putting myself in Serena's place, feeling her feelings.

What would he want to do that to me for?

I heard her voice say this out loud, just behind me, where there was nothing but wall. I edged along until I came to a door, and then I went through, into a tiny bedroom full of coats, and so far nobody either making out or unconscious upon the floor. I sat on a pile of parkas and jean jackets in this little room, an alcove in the rising buzz of the party outside. I saw a phone, and I dialled Serena's number. Her sister answered.

"Thanks a lot," she said when I said it was me. "You woke up Jason."

"What's wrong with him?" I asked.

There was a silence, then Serena's voice got on the line. "I'm going to hang up."

"Don't."

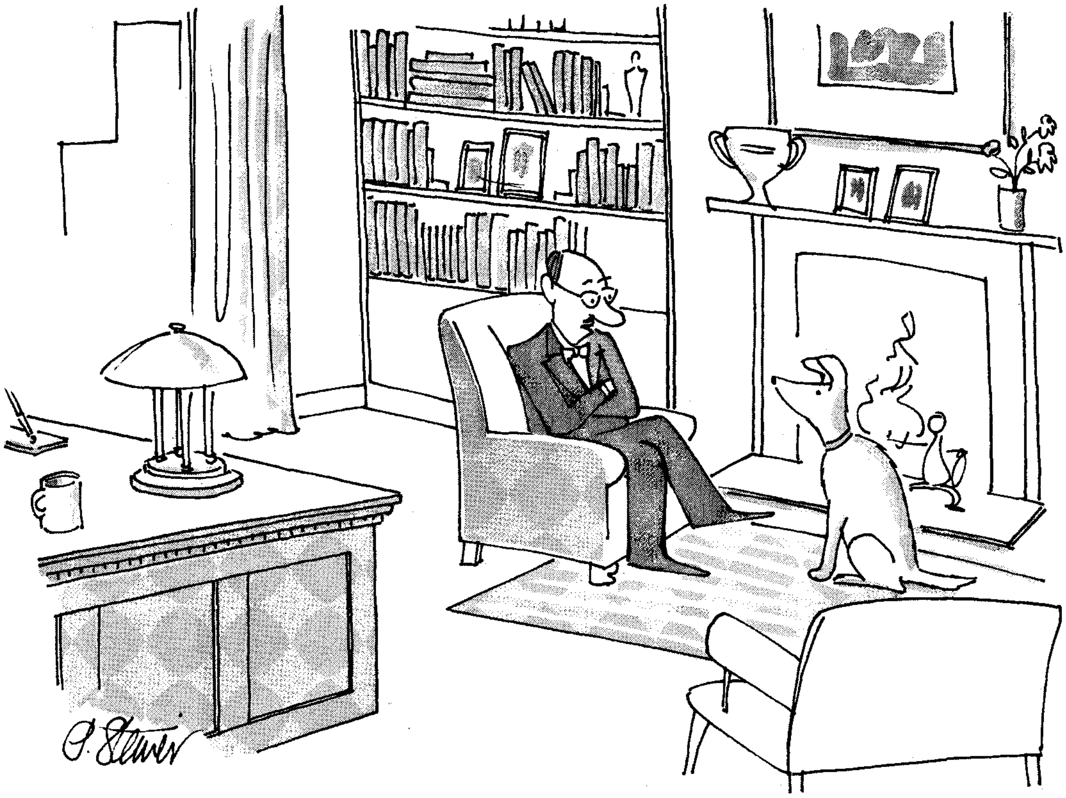
"He's crying. His ears hurt so bad he can't stand it."

"I'm coming over there."

"Forget it. Forget you."

She said the money I had loaned her would be in the mail. She reminded me it was a long time since the last time I had called. And then the phone went dead. I held the droning receiver in my hand, and tried to clear my mind. The only thing I saw in it, clear as usual, was the van. I decided this was a sign for me to get in behind the wheel. I should drive straight to Serena's house, put on the touch, help her son out. So I set my drink on the windowsill. Then I slipped out the door and I walked down the porch steps, only to find them waiting.

I guess he had recognized me after all, and I guess he was from Montana. He had friends, too. They stood around the van, and their heads were



"I've told you why I need a dog. Now suppose you tell me what makes you think you might be that dog."

level with the roof, for they were tall.

"Let's go for a ride," said the one from the all-night gas pump.

He knocked on the window of my van with his knuckles. When I told him no thanks, he started karate-kicking the door. He wore black cowboy boots, pointy-toed, with hard-edged new heels. They left ugly dents every time he landed a blow.

"Thanks anyhow," I repeated. "But the party's not over." I tried to get back into the house, but, like in a bad dream, the door was stuck, or locked. I hollered, pounded, kicked at the very marks that desperate dog had left, but the music rose and nobody heard. So I ended up in the van. They acted very gracious. They urged me to drive. They were so polite that I tried to tell myself they weren't all that bad. And sure enough, after we had drove for a while, these Montana guys said they had chipped in together to buy me a present.

"What is it?" I asked. "Don't keep me in suspense."

"Keep driving," said the pump jockey.

"I don't really go for surprises," I said. "What's your name, anyhow?"

"Marty."

"I got a cousin named Marty," I said.

"Forget it."

The guys in the back exchanged a grumbling kind of laughter, a knowing set of groans. Marty grinned, turned toward me from the passenger seat.

"If you really want to know what we're going to give you, I'll tell. It's a map. A map of Montana."

Their laughter got wild and went on for too long.

"I always liked the state," I said in a serious voice.

"No shit," said Marty. "Then I hope you like sitting on it." He signalled where I should turn, and all of a sudden I realized that Lewey's lay ahead. Lewey ran his Tattoo Den from the basement of his house, kept his equipment set up and ready for the weekend.

"Whoa," I said. I stopped the van. "You can't tattoo a person against his will. It's illegal."

"Get your lawyer on it tomorrow." Marty leaned in close for me to see his eyes. I put the van back in gear but just chugged along, desperately thinking. Lewey was a strange kind of guy, an old Dutch sailor who got beached here, about as far as you can get from salt water. I decided that I'd ask Marty, in a polite kind of way, to beat me up instead. If that failed, I would tell him that there were many states I would not mind so much—smaller, rounder ones.

"Are any of you guys from any other state?" I asked, anxious to trade.

"Kansas."

"South Dakota."

It wasn't that I really had a thing against those places, understand; it's just that the straight-edged shape is not a Chippewa preference. You look around you, and everything you see is round, everything in nature. There are no perfect boundaries, no borders. Only human-made things tend toward cubes and squares—the van, for instance. That was an example. Suddenly I realized that I was driving a wheeled version of the state of North Dakota.

"Just beat me up, you guys. Let's get this over with. I'll stop."

But they laughed, and then we were at Lewey's.

THE sign on his basement door said "COME IN." I was shoved from behind and strapped together by five pairs of heavy, football-toughened hands. I was the first to see Lewey, I think, the first to notice that he was not just a piece of all the trash and accumulated junk that washed through the concrete-floored cellar but a person, sitting still as any statue, in a corner, on a chair that creaked and sang when he rose and walked over.

He even looked like a statue—not the type you see in history books, I don't mean those, but the kind you see for sale as you drive along the highway. He was a Paul Bunyan, carved with a chain saw. He was rough-looking, finished in big strokes.

"Please," I said, "I don't want . . ."

Marty squeezed me around the throat and tousled up my hair, like friendly.

"He's just got cold feet. Now remember, Lewey, map of Montana. You know where. And put in a lot of detail."

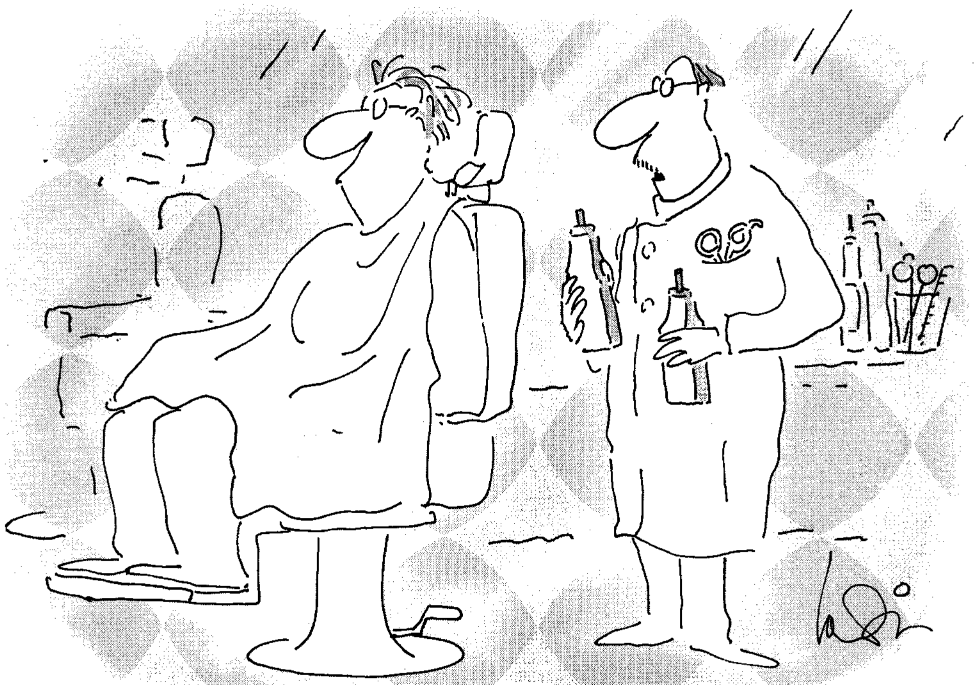
I tried to scream.

"Like I was thinking," Marty went on, "of those maps we did in grade school showing products from each region. Cows' heads, oil wells, those little sheaves of wheat, and so on."

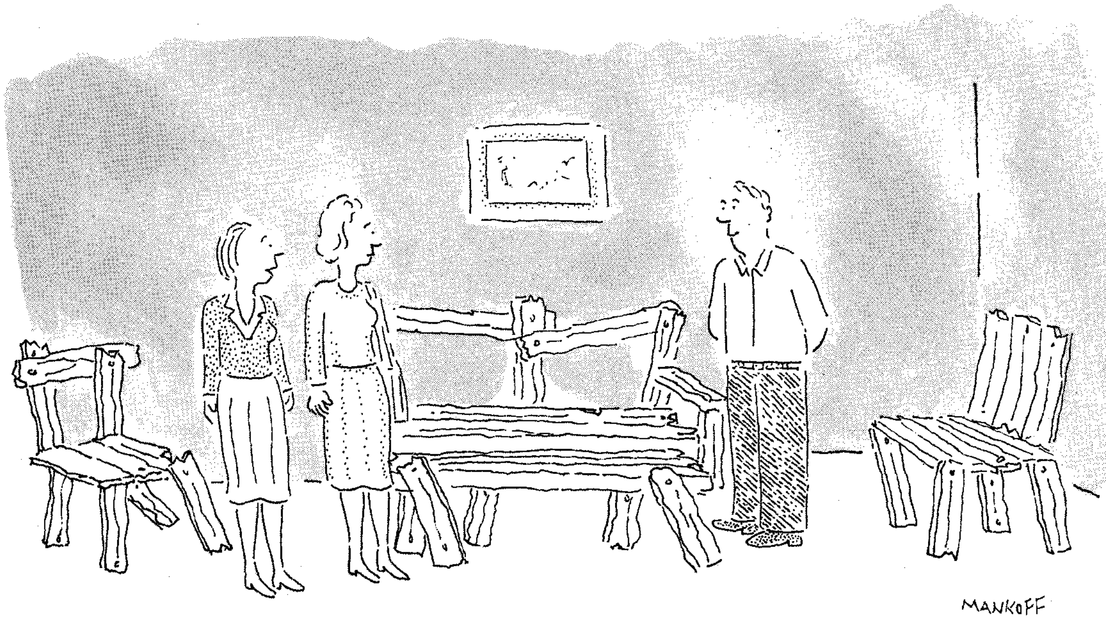
"Tie him up," said Lewey. His voice was thick, with a commanding formal accent. "Then leave."

They did. They took my pants and the keys to the van. I heard the engine roar and die away, and I rolled from side to side in my strict bindings. I felt Lewey's hand on my shoulder.

"Be still." His voice had changed, now that the others were gone, to a low



"Oil or vinegar?"



"Jeffrey makes all our furniture himself."

sound that went with his appearance and did not seem at all unkind. I looked up at him. A broke-down God is who he looked like from my worm's-eye view. His beard was pure white, long and patchy, and his big eyes frozen blue. His head was half bald, shining underneath the brilliant fluorescent tubes in the ceiling. You never know where you're going to find your twin in the world, your double. I don't mean in terms of looks—I'm talking about mind-set. You never know where you're going to find the same thoughts in another brain, but when it happens you know it right off, just like the two of you were connected by a small electrical wire that suddenly glows red-hot and sparks. That's what happened when I met Lewey Koep.

"I don't have a pattern for Montana," he told me. He untied my ropes with a few quick jerks, sneering at the clumsiness of the knots. Then he sat in his desk chair again, and watched me get my bearings.

"I don't want anything tattooed on me, Mr. Koep," I said. "It's a kind of revenge plot."

He sat in silence, in a waiting quiet, hands folded and face composed. By now I knew I was safe, but I had nowhere to go, and so I sat down on a pile of magazines. He asked, "What revenge?" and I told him the story, the whole thing right from the beginning, when I walked into the bingo hall. I left out the personal details about Serena and me, but he got the picture. I told him about the van.

"That's an unusual piece of good fortune."

"Have you ever had any? Good fortune?"

"All the time. Those guys paid plenty, for instance, though I suppose they'll want it back. You pick out a design. You can owe me."

He opened a book he had on the table, a notebook with plastic pages that clipped in and out, and handed it over to me. I didn't want a tattoo, but I didn't want to disappoint this man, either. I leafed through the dragons and the hearts, thinking how to refuse, and then suddenly I saw the horse. It was the same picture that had come into my head as I sat in the woods. Now here it was. The pony skimmed, legs outstretched, reaching for the edge of the page. I got a thought in my head, clear and vital, that this little horse would convince Serena I was serious about her.

"This one."

Lewey nodded, and heated his tools.

THAT'S why I got it put on, that little horse, and suffered pain. Now my hand won't let me rest. It throbs and aches as if it was coming alive again after a hard frost had made it numb. I know I'm going somewhere, taking this hand to Serena. Even walking down the road in a pair of big-waisted green pants belonging to Lewey Koep, toward the So Long Bar, where I keep everything I own in life, I'm going forward. My hand is a ball of pins, but when I look down I see the little black horse running hard, fast, and serious.

I'm ready for what will come next. That's why I don't fall on the ground, and I don't yell, when I come across the van in a field. At first, I think it is the dream van, the way I always see it in my vision. Then I look, and it's the real vehicle. Totalled.

My bingo van is smashed on the sides, kicked and scratched, and the insides are scattered. Stereo wires, glass, and ripped pieces of carpet are spread here and there among the new sprouts of wheat. I force open a door that is bent inward. I wedge myself behind the wheel, which is tipped over at a crazy angle, and I look out. The windshield is shattered in a sunlight burst, through which the world is cut to bits.

I've been up all night, and the day stretches long before me, so I decide to sleep where I am. Part of the seat is still wonderfully upholstered, thick and plush, and it reclines now—permanently, but so what? I relax into the small comfort, my body as warm as an animal, my thoughts drifting. I know I'll wake to nothing, but at this moment I feel rich. Sinking away, I feel like everything worth having is within my grasp. All I have to do is put my hand into the emptiness.

—LOUISE ERDRICH

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ANOTHER CLEVER SHOP NAME WE WISH WE HADN'T SEEN

Deli Beloved, a delicatessen in Stevensville, Mich.

•

WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE DEPT.

[*From the Dallas Morning News*]

Forecasting the future of new technologies is fraud with peril.

REFLECTIONS

SOVIET WOMEN

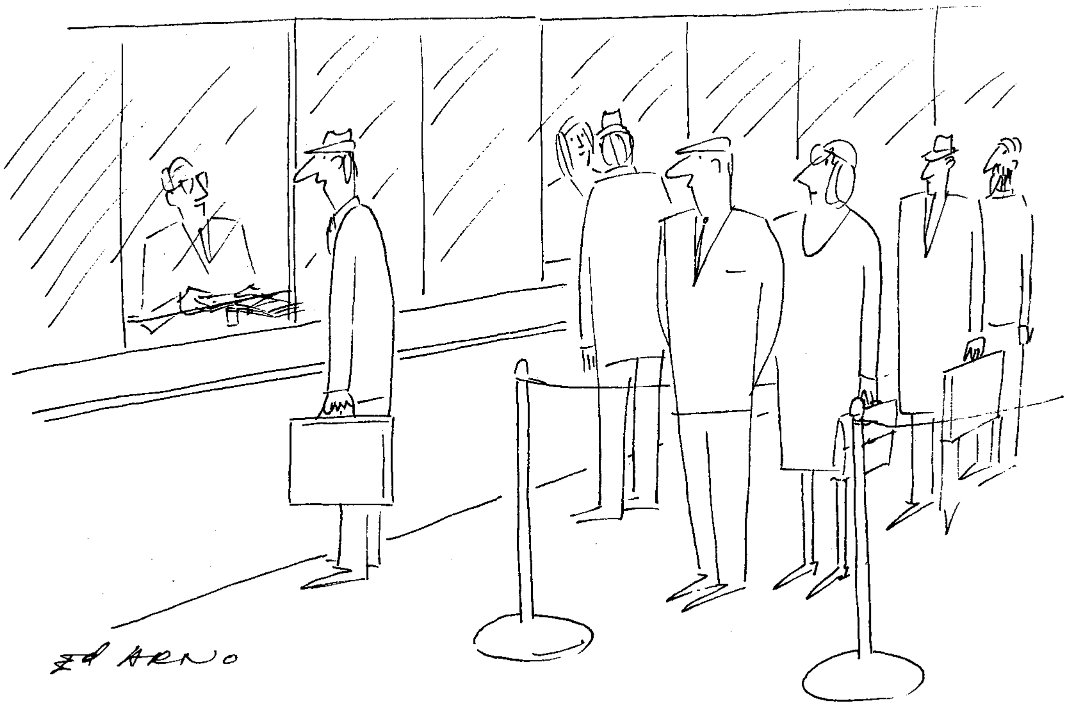
OVER the years, the homes of my friends in the Soviet Union have exemplified the virtues that underlie the national tradition of *uyutnost:* that dearest of Russian words, approximated by our "coziness" and more nearly by the German *Gemütlichkeit*, denotes the Slavic talent for creating a warm, tender environment even in dire poverty and with the most modest means; it is associated with intimate scale, with small, dark spaces, with domestic generosity, with a nurturing love. It is a quality of soul my childhood was blessed with, thanks to my Russian mother and my Russian governess, and particularly my Russian great-grandmother and great-aunt, in whose tiny Paris flat—filled with whatever few icons and pieces of china and other treasures they had salvaged from the revolution—I spent the happiest days of my first ten years.

Except for the erratic attentions of a French father, I was brought up exclusively by Russian women. They bullied me into taking my first steps, speaking my first words, surviving my first illnesses, learning my first manners, memorizing my first prayers, reciting my first lessons. They were my first loves and my first tyrants. Beneath their veneer of tenderness and Tolstoyan pacifism, the prim gentility of their White Russian provenance, there was a searing energy, an iron discipline, a formidable will to dominate, and it was in them that I first sensed the fierce power of Russian women.

A treasured early memory: the flutter of my babushka's silks and mended laces as we prepare for bedtime, the smells of verbena and rose water, of dried apricots and steaming kasha, the rough edges of the cameo brooches I finger as she undresses me, her fragrant triple benediction as she puts me to bed before singing me to sleep with an old Russian lullaby. "*Bayushki-bayu*," the lullaby went. I learned only recently that the ancient words originally meant "to cast a spell," as in "I *spell* you into sleep," and I wondered if this might not be the mantric phrase with which Russian women have hypnotized generations upon generations of their offspring. It should not be surprising, then, that during my most recent visits to the Soviet Union I decided to examine, amid the tumult of *glasnost*, the forces and circumstances that made these women as powerful as they are—these "violent women," as a character in a novel of mine once called them, "shouting, forbidding, force-feeding propaganda, instilling the little order there was in this most anarchic of nations or perhaps making the disorder even more intense, women beating up their men when they led them out of bars by the scruff of their necks . . . all over the nation women were building, bullying, denouncing, censuring."

Russia is a region in which woman-centered cults and social orders lingered far longer than in most other cultures. Worship of the "Great Mother" and of other self-inseminating female deities common to agricultural societies prevailed long into the Christian era. Russian folklore still remains uniquely rich in Powerful Woman archetypes—goddesses who control marriage, health, fate, fertility, spinning, birth. *Polyanitsy* (from *pole*, "field") are amazonian heroines of early Russian epics who are as strong and daring as their male counterparts. The *rusalka* we meet in the opening lines of Pushkin's "Ruslan and Lyudmila" is one of a group of virginal, often malicious water deities who live in streams, lakes, and ponds. The most fearsome and pervasive female prototype of all is Baba Yaga, an unmarried, prescient, angry old witch, and a symbol of female wisdom at its most wrathful and punitive.

In few other developed societies, historians note, did women retain power so long over tribal institutions and maintain such a forceful role in family life. The heroes of Russian epics must obey the orders of their mothers or wives rather than of any male authorities; contrary to Latin or Anglo-Saxon custom, a son needed his mother's blessing, rather than his father's, when he left home for war or on any quest for honor or success. One of the most popular male archetypes of Russian folklore is Ivan the Fool, a kind, generous "village idiot" figure who lives at home with his widowed



"The usual, Ben."

mother and ultimately triumphs over his worldly, questing brothers by retaining the shamanistic powers of the female hearth. To this day, few idioms so forcefully express a country's umbilical spell upon its citizens as do those of Mother Russia. Many of the nation's major rivers—the Volga in particular—are referred to as *Matushka*, "little mother," while the noun for "homeland" is *rodina*, from the word *rod*, "birth."

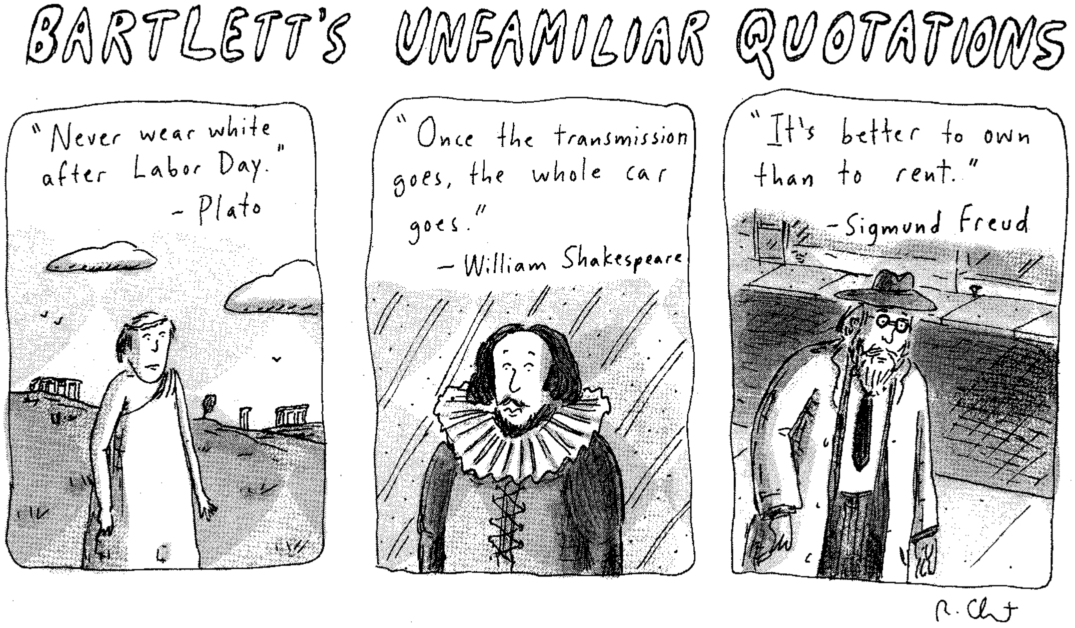
There are also few cultures in which the sentiment of heterosexual love, on the part of men, has been so admixed with dread. The very word for passion, *strast*, also means "horror, terror"; men's apprehension of women, and that exacerbated tension between the sexes peculiar to the Russian heritage, remains explicit in lines of the popular song "Ochi Chernye" ("Dark Eyes"): "*Kak lyublyu ya vas, kak boyus ya vas*" ("How I love you, how I fear you"). This blend of awe and aversion may well be rooted in an archaic terror of the female's sexual powers—a terror that the Orthodox Church fully exploited when Christianity finally came to Russia, in the tenth century.

"Welcome to Club Dead."

An interesting new contribution to Slavic studies, Joanna Hubbs' "Mother Russia," draws close links between Russia's singularly forceful maternal archetypes and the obscurantism of its Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church, Hubbs contends, had to struggle against unusually powerful matriarchal patterns. Furthermore, its asceticism was not counterbalanced by any tradition of chivalric love, or by the liberating secular influences of a Renaissance or an Enlightenment. And so Russian culture remained relatively deprived of that idealization of marital sex which prevails in much of the Roman Catholic tradition. Women's unusual control over many areas of communal life and the dominance of female figures in folklore were counterbalanced by severe social oppression on the part of church and state. The Orthodox clergy looked on the female sex as the source of spiritual danger. Faithful to Tertullian's view of women as "the Devil's gateway," Orthodox missionaries emphasized women's mental inferiority and their powers of witchcraft. Women were forbidden access to church services during their menstrual periods, and Communion bread could be baked only by females past childbearing age.

The occupation of Kievan Rus by Muslim Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries intensified these patterns of oppression, particularly in the urban boyar, or upper, classes. Women's social status reached a low point in the seventeenth century, when an extreme segregation of the sexes prevailed and was a matter of family honor: in those very decades when the salons of Parisian women were the center of France's literary and political culture, virtually dictating men's tastes and restructuring the mores of their nation, Moscow women lived in harem-like *terema*, sequestered on the uppermost floors of their houses; they ate separately from men, and were rigorously shielded from public view. Until the time of Peter the Great, who outraged many of his subjects by requiring them to hold Western-style mixed gatherings in their houses, women were allowed out of the house mostly to go to church. (One can think of few cultures with so many sexist folk sayings: "A maiden seen is copper, the unseen girl is gold." "Long in hair, short in brains." "Beat the wife for better cabbage soup." "I thought I saw two people, but it was only a man and his wife.")

Russian attitudes toward womanhood were also affected by one of the most crudely misogynist documents of the Christian era—the Domostroi, or Law of the Home, written by the monk Sylvester and strongly supported by Czar Ivan the Terrible. A manual for family behavior that modelled marriage on the monastic ideal (a "perverted form of Christianity," a "debased" morality, the philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev called it, "a disgrace to the Russian people"), the Domostroi offers meticulous instructions on the manner in which husbands must beat their wives (privately, "politely"). It orders wives to complain to no one about such abuse, and to remain silent about all domestic problems. And it may well have been responsible for that


BARTLETT'S UNFAMILIAR QUOTATIONS
"Never wear white after Labor Day." - Plato
"Once the transmission goes, the whole car goes." - William Shakespeare
"It's better to own than to rent." - Sigmund Freud

rigorous habit of privacy concerning family matters which persists in Soviet culture to this day, presenting a formidable obstacle to psychologists, gynecologists, and almost any kind of social worker.

I

ONE of the first questions I ask any Soviet woman aims at deciphering her views of *us*—American women. What central differences does she detect between her community of women and ours?

Among the many traits that Soviet women admire in their American peers is our lack of inhibitions, our boldness and daring.

"How I envy your inner freedom," a restaurant waitress in Moscow told me. "My generation was bred in a reign of terror—terror of jails, of reprisals, of authorities, of standing out in a crowd, of speaking our minds. . . . American women have so much more joy than we do. Our lives are so much more timid, formal, constrained."

The athleticism of American women was the trait most admired by a team of seven factory workers in Siberia. Only two of them knew how to swim; they had just learned in the past year, at one of the health clubs currently being founded in work collectives, and were now striving for "a more streamlined, American kind of silhouette" by doing thirty-lap sessions on weekends. "We hear that American women spend much of their free time *on themselves*, improving their bodies," one of the Siberians said. "That's an amazing notion to us."

There are, inevitably, some negative comparisons, and those tend to center on Americans' "sad overindividualism."

"Our sense of community is fast declining, but you're still far more solitary and lonely than we are," said the actress Sofiko Chiaureli, one of the Soviet Union's most beloved stars, who has attended film festivals in the United States. "Over here, if you fell sick in the street you'd be immediately taken into someone's house. Over there, no one would know the difference if you died. And you're so much less domestic! We always spread the table at home for a foreign guest. It's unthinkable to take a visitor to a restaurant. American women seem to *live* in restaurants."

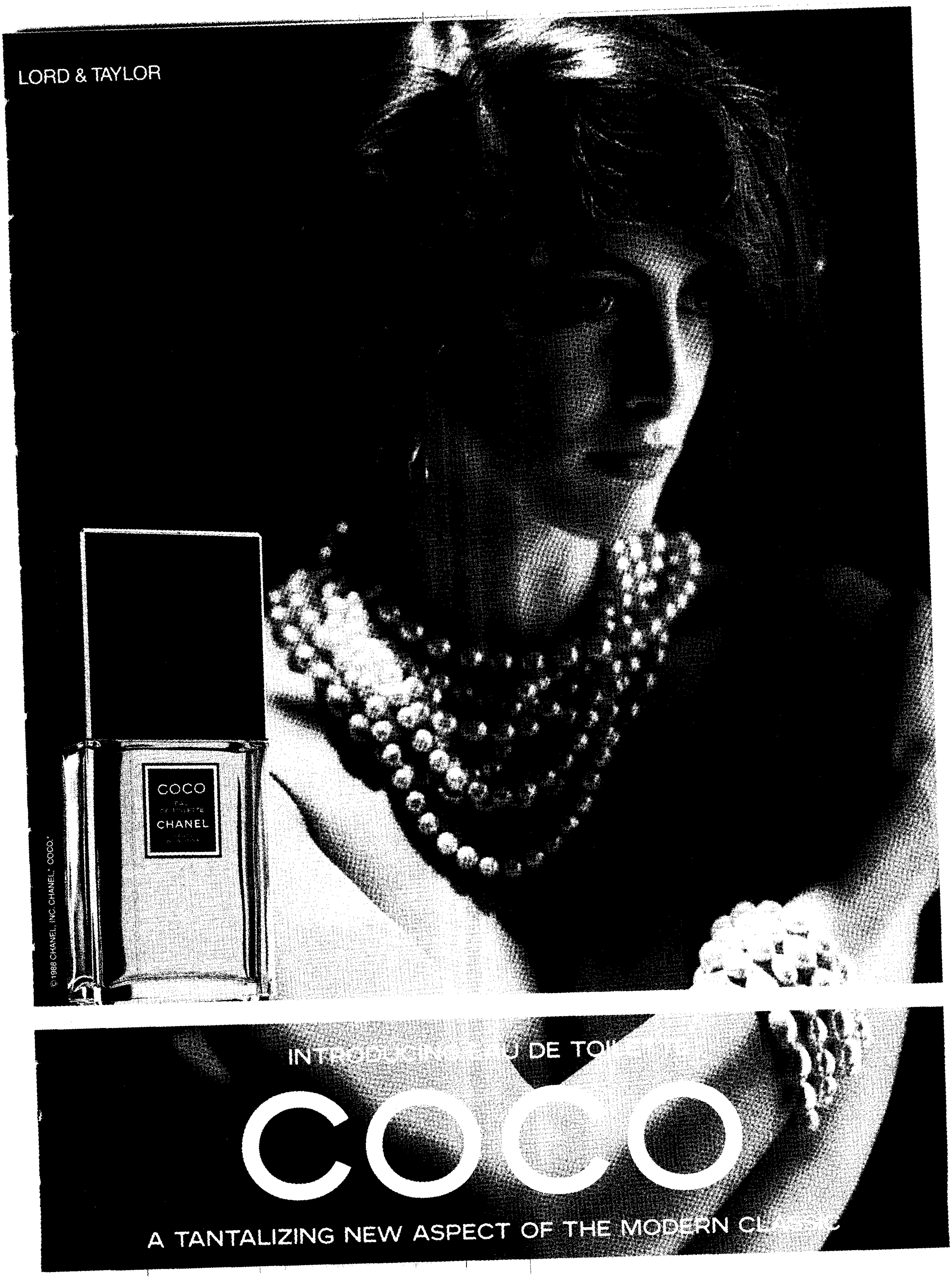
Another recurring pattern in the impression that Soviet women have of their American peers is the youthful, daring behavior of older citizens. My Soviet acquaintances kept looking with wistful admiration at any travelling American women over fifty years of age. One of my friends, a thirty-eight-year-old Muscovite, was particularly awed by a group of Chicago sexagenarians in white shorts, encountered in a hotel lobby, who were travelling through the Soviet Union to engage in tennis matches with Soviet players of their age group. "How admirable that you remain so adventurous," she reflected. "It would be unthinkable for us to make this kind of trip at that age. Here we become old at thirty-five. I am old already."

But there is one aspect of American women's lives that Soviet women admire and envy above all others—American men. Throughout my months of travel in the Soviet Union, I shared few conversations with women in which I did not hear lavish praise of American men's amazing "gentlemanliness" and "casual elegance," their talent as "good providers," and simultaneous invectives against the "passivity" and "boorishness" of Soviet males.

The Leningrad fashion designer Aleksandra Sokolova, for instance, once visited Cincinnati as a delegate to a women's congress, and her descriptions of the United States center on our men's "nobility of manner." "Their constant smile, their gallantry—that was the most amazing and impressive part of my trip," she said. "In the streets, in their homes, as soon as they feel you mightn't like something, they say 'Excuse me.' In comparison, our men's manners are constantly, uncouthly rude."

Even in the ultra-patriotic city of Tashkent, a group of women journalists concurred. "American men are so much more *gallant* in their behavior, and take so much better care of their appearance," one of them said. "If a Soviet man isn't taught by his wife how to dress, how to behave, he tends to remain just boorish."

Soviet women throughout the nation are obsessed, these days, with the decline in national courtesy. There is much self-searching and a lot of talk about root causes: Stalin's extermination of both the pre-revolutionary and the Bolshevik intelligentsia, which had been traditional bearers of civility; the cynicism, the lessening of compassion, the spiralling growth of black-market corruption and racketeering, the general lowering of morals that spread through the society during the Brezhnev era, now known as *zastoi*, "the stagnancy"; the sense of individual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helplessness that grew during those years, leading citizens to boss and shove one another more rudely than ever before, as their only way of self-assertion.

So finding a spouse or a companion who is a decorous American-type *dzhentlmen* (one of many words that have become part of Sovenglish) has become an obsession among Soviet women. It leads to this irony: our male citizenry, which for two centuries has been derided by Europeans for its uncouthness, its raw frontier manner, is now looked on by Soviet women as the paragon of chivalry and aristocratic courtesy. Although British, French, Italian, and German tourists are more numerous than Americans in the Soviet Union, one never hears any praise of the deportment of these men. Only the American model will do.

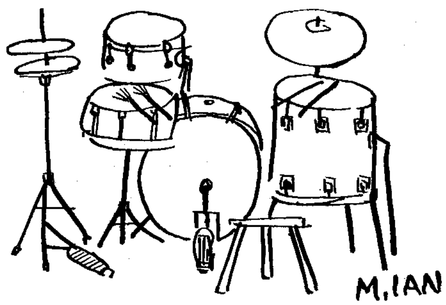
Among the intelligentsia, many Soviet males are trying with touching ardor to redeem their image. There is a growing fashion among them to say "Madame" and to kiss women's hands in greeting. "I drink to your aristocratic eyes" (or "aristocratic hands," or "aristocratic bearing") is one of the most popular toasts at dinner gatherings. Soviet men's earnest efforts to open doors, to help women in and out of coats and cars, to carry their smallest parcels, transport one to prewar Europe, and make the most polished American fellows seem quite rustic. And this fixation on manners must be seen in the context of a far wider nostalgia for "the cultivated person" of pre-revolutionary culture. It is a nostalgia that has to do also with the current search for a more clearly defined national identity and the renewed interest in Russian history and religion, which are among the most striking aspects of the *glasnost* era.

"The tragedies of the past decades have created generations of males who are a totally different species from those of forty years ago," Aleksandra Sokolova says. "As late as the mid-nineteen-forties, it would have been unthinkable in this city for a man not to stand up for a woman in a bus, or for an adolescent to shove his way through a tram without being reprimanded by dozens of his elders. No courses, no book manuals can restructure them. Even our contemporary youth may be lost to us—Russian men's traditional generosity, nobility of character are gone. We are left just dreaming, merely dreaming of such creatures. Now there are only a few exceptions left who are bearable to live with."

II

THE heroine of one of the most popular works of Soviet fiction of recent decades, Natalya Baranskaya's 1969 novella "Nedelya Kak Nedelya" ("A Week Like Any Other"), is a young scientist so harassed by the double burden of career and motherhood that she constantly feels guilty of being a failure at both. The most commonly repeated verbs in the story are "run" and "fly." Like many working mothers, the heroine, Olga, lives over an hour away from work, in a new district of the Moscow periphery, where there are as yet no stores; she runs to her laboratory on Monday mornings, but is often late because of some crisis with her children, and she interprets every look or word from her superiors as a reprimand; after work, she runs or flies from bus stops to trolley stops, from subway stops to sparsely stocked grocery stores, her arms laden with parcels, and she often stumbles, scraping her knees. Yet this is a privileged life. Olga and her husband, Dima, are research scientists with advanced university degrees. Olga shares a laboratory—where her job is to test polymer materials—with eight colleagues, all of them women who live in a state of "constant anxiety, eternal rushing, fear" somewhat akin to hers.

Written in the form of one week's diary entries, "A Week Like Any Other," the angriest woman-centered text to have been published in the Soviet Union since the nineteen-twenties, expresses with unsurpassed poignancy the nightmares of Soviet women's daily life: food shortages; endless queues; indifferent doctors hastily attending children who constantly get ill from sloppily run nursery schools; a dearth of the most basic household implements or services; passive husbands, engrossed in TV or newspapers, who never lift a finger to help out.



At the office, as Olga fills out a government-issued "Questionnaire for Women," which asks her how many hours she spends on "leisure," she sardonically muses, "What nonsense. Lei-sure. Personally, my sport is running." The next query sends her into a state of panic: she must count the days of work she has skipped because of illness—hers, her family's. She has been absent for seventy-eight days, because of the colds her children keep catching at the day-care center. As her colleagues discuss the survey, Olga asks herself a subversive question: "What, exactly, does the concept 'a real Soviet woman' entail?"

Olga's mornings are a particular nightmare. Her husband helps, grudgingly, with getting their two small children washed, fed, dressed in the many layers needed in a Moscow winter. "It is five past seven and I am running, of course." Throughout this narrative, one senses that the most precious part of Olga's life, aside from her beloved children, is the daily support of the women in her work collective. They take turns shopping for one another, sacrificing their lunch hour to buy communal bologna, bread, kilos of butter, litres of milk. The touch of a woman friend's hand on Olga's cheek is the week's greatest reassurance, its only soothing moment.

In the evenings, if there has been a late meeting at the lab, Olga runs back to the subway and bus stops, flies across empty lots, runs up the stairs to find her hungry children ruining their appetites by eating bread while her husband remains buried in technical journals. After dinner, while he goes on reading, Olga does the dishes, does her children's and husband's laundry and mending, prepares their clothes for the morning, sweeps the kitchen. In constant terror of the alarm clock, which rings at 6 A.M., she is seldom in bed before midnight, and must often get up to soothe a child made sick by the nursery-school diet. Olga's husband does take out the garbage.

It has been years since Olga and her husband have "been" anywhere together—to a film, a ballet, even a café. It is intimated that although they "love" each other and seldom quarrel, their life is so harassed that sexual contact occurs only rarely.

Olga belongs to that new generation

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of Soviet women who cannot count on babushkas to take care of their children; their mothers are too busy with their own careers.

At work, Olga is in constant fear of being fired.

"Am I really such a good mother?" she worries during a particularly trying day at work. If she forgets to alert her husband about a late meeting at her lab, she finds an angry spouse, and children weeping again with fatigue and hunger, or made ill by the supper their father has hurriedly prepared.

When the longed-for Saturday morning finally comes around, Olga makes five days' worth of soup, dusts, scrubs floors, does the week's heavy laundry, puts up dry-fruit compote, grinds meat for hamburgers, sends her children out with their father for their only fresh air of the week, irons, sews, gives herself her weekly shampoo.

Throughout these days, Olga has kept reminding herself that she's a luckier woman than most—luckier than her colleague Shura, whose husband is a drunkard, or her colleague Lusya, who was abandoned by a married man late in her pregnancy. Still, on Saturday night there are harsh words exchanged between the spouses, because Dima considers it his privilege to read while Olga continues working. After dinner, she breaks into tears during the children's weekly bath, and slaps one of them unfairly for some small misdemeanor. "I'm tired, do you understand?—tired!" Olga shouts. The undone work keeps mounting, she yells, and her youth is passing. Olga breaks down and sobs. Dima puts her to bed like a child as their babies howl about them, and brings her a cup of tea. But the next day Olga and Dima resume their argument. Why, with two careers, do they have barely enough money to make ends meet? So much of their salary is spent on food. How are they to solve their dilemma?

Dima's suggestion is similar to proposals currently being made by many Soviet husbands: Olga should stop working and stay home to take care of the family—what with all the sick days she takes, she earns next to nothing anyhow.

But Olga is appalled by the suggestion: "You want to shut me in here for the whole year? And could we live on your salary?"

Dima replies that if he could be freed of "his share of domestic chores" he could earn more.

"All this boring stuff is for me alone," she exclaims, pointing to the kitchen mess, "and the only interesting things for yourself!" What about her five years of graduate study, her dissertation, her professional standing? At the end of the week, the couple are increasingly troubled by the burdens of everyday life, and their marriage is tenser than it was seven days earlier.

d.ehrenberg

I met many Olgas during the past year—in Riga, Leningrad, Moscow, Tbilisi, Tashkent, Irkutsk. Progress, a Moscow-based publishing concern that sponsored my visit, assigned one of its editors—the wondrously warm, generous, and cultivated Nonna Ionovna Volenko—to be my guide for my Soviet journey. Like all Soviet publishers, Progress is under the jurisdiction of a government publishing committee, Goskomizdat, which has a branch in all of the Soviet Union's major cities. Hence the local Goskomizdat of each region we visited could assign one of its employees to be our local guide, and it made appointments for us with women of various professions—doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists, psychologists, factory workers—while leaving us free to speak with any other citizens who wished to talk to us.

Throughout the weeks of our travels together, as Nonna and I shared hotel rooms, meals, gruelling night flights, and a growing friendship, we heard women complain about the double burdens of home and career in a mood of bitterness, frequent anger, and amazing candor—a candor made possible only by Gorbachev's *glasnost*. In this nation where over ninety-two per cent of the women are fully employed, and compose fifty-one per cent of the nation's work force, the word we heard most frequently was *peregruzhennost*, "overburdening."

Few communal fates are more ironic than that of contemporary Soviet women. After the revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik regime became the first government in history to declare that women's emancipation was one of its primary goals, and to write it into law. Legislation insuring equal pay for equal work—akin to our doomed Equal Rights Amendment—was instantly effected. And women's right (if not their obligation) to work became central to Soviet notions of citizenship. According to Engels and Lenin, women's full participation in the labor force, and the communal households that must replace the nuclear family, would put an end to the "open or disguised domestic enslavement" (Engels' words) imposed on women since time immemorial. The Soviet founding fathers also predicted that the overthrow of capitalism would automatically bring about a radical change of male attitudes, which would assure women full equality at home and in the workplace.

Yet after the first fifteen years of Soviet rule it was evident that the Leninist ideal of freeing women from the fetters of wedlock, diapers, and saucepans was still a distant utopia, that the government was not able or willing to effect that radical reëducation of the male psyche promised in 1917. In retrospect, it is also evident that the Soviet Union's commitment to women's equal employment has never been purely ideological; it has been based, rather, on pragmatic, demographic factors—rapid economic growth, labor shortages, and a frequent shortage of males.

In a country as phenomenally backward as the Soviet Union was in 1917, speedy industrialization was central to survival, and female labor, from the outset of the first Bolshevik government, was considered essential to the process. Stalin's Five-Year Plan of 1928 and the tragic loss of men's lives caused by succeeding historical events incited the state to mobilize increasing numbers of women into the work force: it is now estimated that some forty million people, the great majority of them male, died in the process of coercive collectivization, in the Second World War, and in Stalin's purges.

The Stalin years also brought a startling reversal of all earlier Bolshevik ideals concerning women and family structure. In the nineteen-thirties, the legal abortions and liberal divorce laws that had been legislated under Lenin were repealed or severely curtailed. As Stalin's regime realized that, contrary to original expectations, rapid industri-

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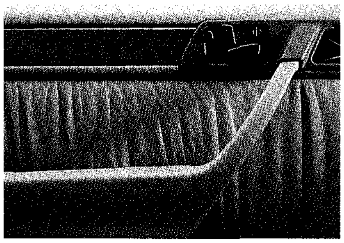

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alization required the discipline of family life, there arose a cult of motherhood quite as intense as the one that had existed under the czars. The state evolved a vast hierarchy of rewards glorifying fertility—Motherhood Medals, Order of the Glory of Motherhood, Mother Heroines (ten children or more).

Divorce and abortion laws were liberalized again after Stalin's death. And in the succeeding decades severe social flaws—scarcities of food and housing, an enduring tradition of male chauvinism, increasingly ineffectual social services—consistently thwarted the government's appeal for larger families. Thus, since the early nineteen-sixties the Soviet leadership has been confronted by a perhaps unresolvable dilemma: it needs women as both producers and reproducers. It is faced with impending labor shortages, a dramatic increase in the divorce rate, and an alarming decline in the number of births in those European parts of Russia where its major industries are clustered. (In 1987, the weekly magazine *Novoe Vremya* predicted that there would be a shortage of a million seven hundred thousand industrial workers by the year 2000.) So it is encouraging more women than ever to work full time; but in order to salvage its future labor force it is simultaneously demanding an increasing number of offspring—preferably three per family—from a nation of women so overburdened that they are more and more reluctant to bring up more than one child.

Ironically, the government's propaganda for larger families has helped heighten women's awareness of their second-class citizenship. Such citizens as the archetypal Olga of "A Week Like Any Other" have become increasingly conscious of the paper equality offered them, of their segregation in badly paid sectors of the economy, and of the sex-role stereotyping that leads to poor promotion records. In the past decade, the average female worker, although she was slightly better educated than her male counterpart, earned only two-thirds of the average male income—a disproportion of wages similar to that of the last prerevolutionary years. Some forty per cent of Soviet working women are employed in unskilled manual labor or low-skilled industrial work. They compose, for instance, ninety-eight per cent of the nation's janitors and street-cleaners, ninety per cent of the conveyor-belt operators, a third of the railroad workers, over two-thirds of the highway-construction crews and of the warehouse workers. As for that fast-declining population still employed in agriculture, more than eighty-five per cent of the mechanized operations are run by men, with a major portion of the arduous manual work left for women to perform.

The higher professions are equally unbalanced. About three-fourths of the schoolteachers, but only about a third of the school principals, are women. Some seventy per cent of the doctors are women, but more than half of the hospital administrators are men, and those administrators are in charge of formulating much local health policy. The inequity is even more striking among engineers and skilled technical workers, seventy per cent of whom are women: in those fields, women constitute only six per cent of the work collectives' leadership, from section chief to enterprise manager.

This inequity prevails even though the quality of women's work is generally conceded to be better than men's. I heard one of the chief editors of a Moscow publishing house state his preference for women employees. "If I have to choose between a man or a woman for a *middle-level* editorial position," he said (the italics are mine), "in nine cases out of ten I'll choose the woman. How much more careful, responsible, punctual, neat, conscientious they are in their work!"

I repeatedly heard these flattering terms applied to the working habits of "the fair sex"—a phrase still traditional among Soviet men and now used ironically by women to stress their growing discontent.

"Our women work well out of a sense of duty, even if the task bores them," I was told by the physicist Ivar Knets, a vice-rector of Riga's Polytechnic Institute, who spent nearly two years in the United States on exchange fellowships. "Whereas Soviet men have a shorter attention span, keep changing lines of work out of restlessness, will work decently only if they feel the immediate usefulness of their labor."

A fellow-Rigan, Monika Zile, who is the editor of Latvia's largest women's magazine, believes that the quality of Soviet men's work is often undermined by lack of self-esteem. "In any working situation, men need far more compliments than women do," she says. "They must be constantly reassured, constantly thanked for what they're doing. We must evolve some way to boost the morale of our male workers—perhaps on the model of the Japanese, who handle morale brilliantly. Our women are somewhat like the Japanese in that they are motivated by pride in their work rather than by the level of their material achievement—and that is the way it should be."

Yet, however highly esteemed their work habits, women are viewed as an unstable work force: because of childbearing and the need to care for their offspring when they are ill, they have a high rate of absenteeism. (Under Gorbachev, the Soviet government offers women partially paid maternity leave until their children are eighteen months old; it offers them an extra eighteen months of tenured but unpaid maternity leave, allowing them to stay home until their children are three years old without the risk of losing their jobs.) But women's poor promotion records, and the prejudices that persist in a nation founded on the principle of sexual equality, cannot be attributed solely to patriarchal attitudes. In analyzing Soviet women's absence from the higher echelons of politics and labor, Western feminists have tended to put too much blame on men's sexist bias. Soviet women are the first to admit that their numerous material hardships, such as the daily stint of standing in long queues for the family's evening meal, rob them of the physical and spiritual energy to strive for positions of greater authority. And now, in the *glasnost* era, they often note, with a touch of irony and pride, that in view of the totalitarianism and the moral debacle of past Soviet regimes (only recently disclosed to them) their skepti-

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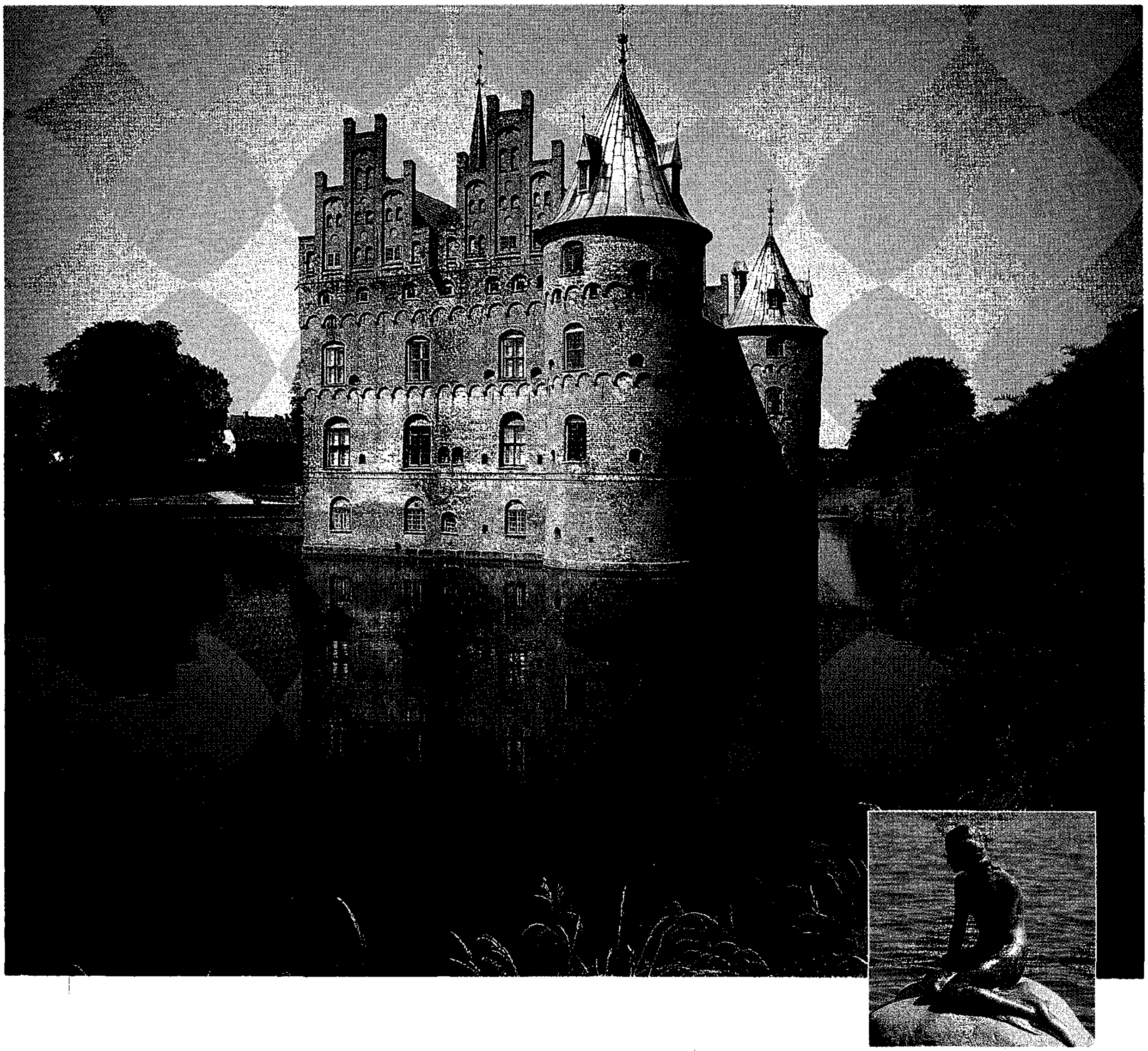

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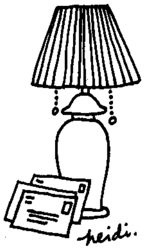
cal reticence toward political power may have been prophetic.

"Politics always struck me and my women friends as something deeply unethical, as dirty work," I was told by Olga Lipovskaya, a young Leningrad mother who supports her family by working as a night watchman in a factory, and who edits what may be the only feminist publication in the Soviet Union, a newsletter called *Zhenskoe Chtenie* (*Women's Reading*). "We've always sensed that personal goals were more important." Olga takes her typewriter to the factory every night, and there she translates Kate Millett, Juliet Mitchell, and other Western feminists for her newsletter. (She estimates that her publication reaches only a few dozen readers, mostly "progressive-thinking men.")

Politics seems to be equally distrusted by women of "the working class," as industrial workers are still admiringly designated. I once asked a Moscow factory worker why, in her opinion, women make up only twenty-nine per cent of the total membership of the Communist Party, and less than five per cent of the Central Committee. (So far, only two women, Ekaterina Furtseva and Aleksandra Biryukova, have ever been members of the all-powerful Politburo.) Her response was "Thank God there are so few of us on the Central Committee. Let the men fight it out up there with their power games. Why should we bother with that junk?" (Such anti-establishment comments are currently voiced with defiant candor—a candor that might well be irreversible, whatever Gorbachev's personal fate, whatever the outcome of his epochal attempts to transform the Soviet political system.)

By the end of those Brezhnev years now referred to as *zastoi*, the heroic tolerance of Soviet working women was showing signs of wear. They had begun to say, ironically, "We have *too much* equality." To many of them, equality had come to mean the equal right to carry hundred-pound sacks of grain or bricks, although there is a state law that sets a limit of forty-four pounds for women workers. Meanwhile, many of the social structures or state services that had enabled their mothers and grandmothers to pursue careers, and had once contributed to making the Soviet Union a showcase welfare state—good, free medical care, preschool centers, family benefits, parental help—had greatly declined in quality or availability.

The babushkas who helped rear a generation of youngsters in the first Soviet decades are becoming an extinct species, for the mothers of most young women with children are hard at work themselves. An increasing number of young mothers are therefore jeopardizing income and career to stay home with their children for three years or more in order to keep them out of poorly run government nurseries.



There have been numerous reports of dishonest *nyani* who adulterate the little ones' milk with water and stretch their meat rations with bread in order to take food home; of day-care centers so carelessly run that the children are constantly getting lice and skin diseases; of day-care centers so badly understaffed and corrupt that their supervisors keep windows open on the coldest days for the purpose of inducing respiratory infections in children so that more will stay home.

In the past years, as the flowering of Gorbachev's *glasnost* has ravaged the seventy-year-old myth of a perfect society, many women have become outspoken in their complaints about such social flaws. My friend Olga Voronina, a philosopher, points to the appalling disparity between Soviet women's arduous schedules and the relative freedom of Soviet men. The average working mother, she notes, spends forty hours a week on shopping, food preparation, housecleaning, and laundry; another sociologist has computed that men spend less than five hours on domestic tasks—mostly shopping.

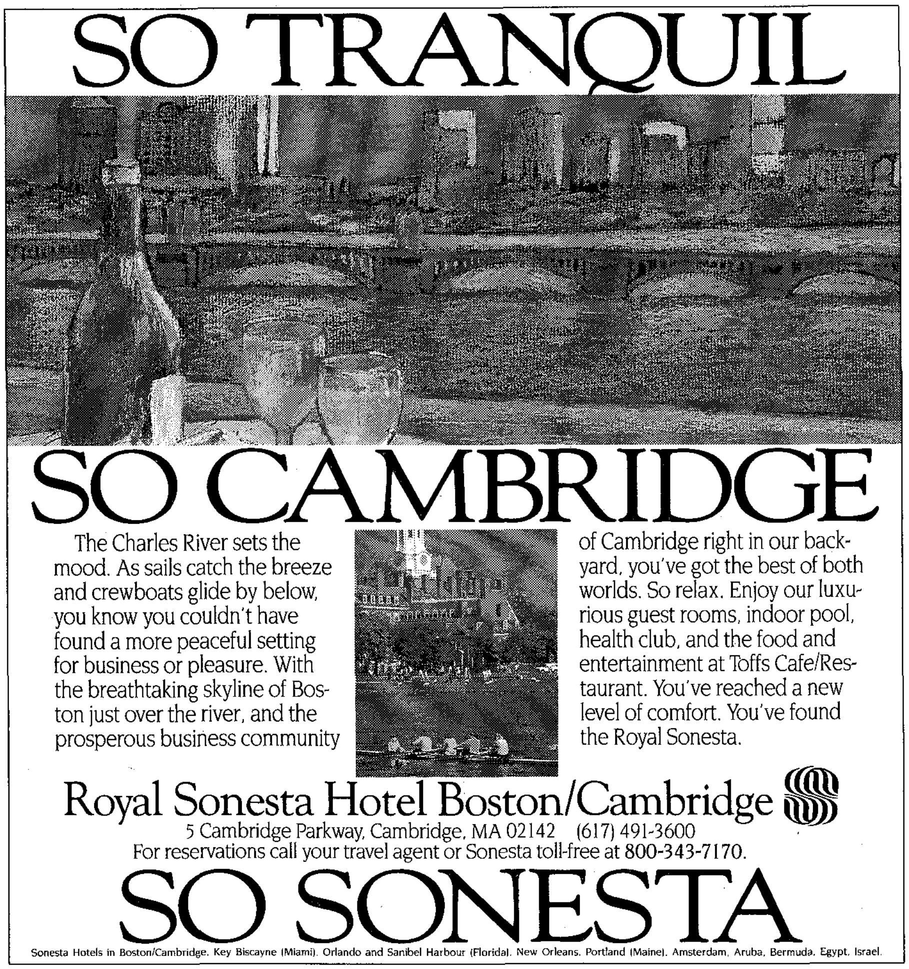
"We still apply the stereotype of the all-capable and resilient woman," Maya Pankratova, a sociologist, recently wrote in the popular weekly *Moscow News*. "Yes, she *can* do everything, but she *doesn't want to anymore*."

"Everything has been proclaimed, but all has still to be obtained," another protestor wrote in that newspaper as she compared the Soviet Union's so-called emancipation of women to "Atlases putting all the load on the shoulders of caryatids." A sociological tool seldom used before the Gorbachev era—public-opinion polling—shows that even though the working mother still enjoys far greater prestige in the eyes of her children and husband than the woman who stays home, and though the term *khozyaika*, "homemaker," remains derogatory, one out of five Soviet women would willingly give up work if she could afford to.

Marx liked to quote the words of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier: "The extension of women's rights is the basic principle of all social progress." But Soviet women, because of their double shift, and the lack of any national tradition of collective action since 1917, have had little opportunity to lobby for the fulfillment of the Marxist ideal of sexual equality. And to this day their government censures any "feminist" movement that would function outside Party control (such an activity has been branded as "bourgeois deviation"). This results in a curious lack of solidarity on their part. In our decade, the deep, loyal friendships for which Russians have been fabled seem to have waned among women. There is a striking lack of trust among them—a result, perhaps, of the scarcity of men that has prevailed since the Second World War, and of women's abiding sense of competing for the precious male. Many professional women I have met, even in a society with traditional Muslim roots, like Tashkent's, will admit that there are few members of their own sex, beyond their mothers and grandmothers, on whom they can rely; their most trusted confidants seem to be men—"platonic friends," who are usually members of their work collective.

One of the most poignant outcries I heard against Soviet women's double shift came from a young mother of two who is a producer at the television station in Riga. In the company of four of her colleagues and of Nonna Volenko, my travelling companion, we had been discussing the central complaint of Soviet women—the overburdening duties of career, housekeeping, and child rearing, summed up by the constantly recurring phrase *trudnosti byta*, "the hardship of everyday life." Who is more lonely within marriage, I had asked her, men or women?

"Women are far, far lonelier," she said, with bitterness. "Look here—I come home, I'm exhausted. I feel lonely because I'm so exhausted that I can't love anyone and don't want to. I only want to rest—they all just bother me. All my womanly instincts have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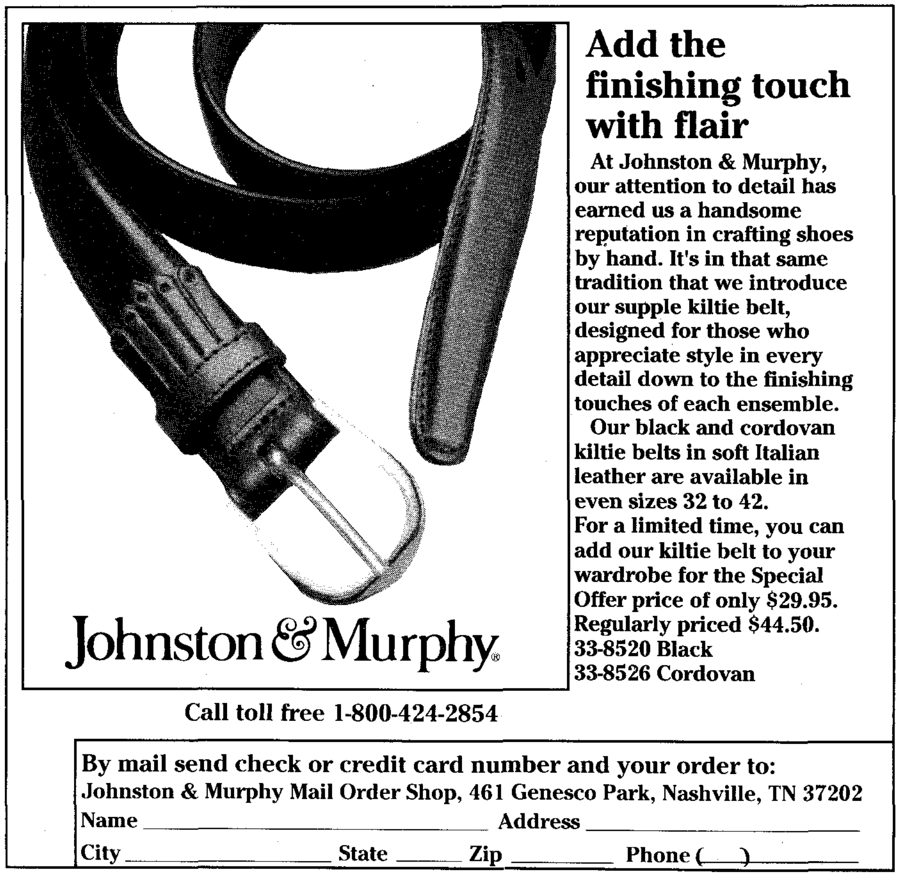
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been drained out of me." On the brink of tears, she exclaimed, "I'm too tired to love!"

A vehement chorus of agreement, and of anger against men, rose from her colleagues. "Of course, when *they* come home they can all rest. They have nothing else to do, or else they pretend to tinker around the house again." The group went on to agree that "no man we know is capable of washing his own plate."

And yet many of the women I've talked to prefer to remain exhausted, to go on complaining, and to keep their husbands out of the kitchen, because "it is not their place to be." As nineteenth-century Russian literature evidences, women's suffering as a redemptive force is a central theme of Russian culture. And many contemporary women admit that their tradition of heroic self-sacrifice is a form of power play, a way of retaining their aura and hence their status. "Of course we're grossly overburdened," a factory worker in Siberia told me. "But we're so used to it we wouldn't give it up for the world. We take such *pride* in surviving it."

III

THE floor attendant at my hotel in Tbilisi was a plump, tired-looking woman in her thirties who earned a hundred rubles a month working three twenty-four-hour shifts a week. She came into my room one morning to show off a skirt of faded bluejean material (a current Soviet fad that has replaced the vogue for trouser jeans), which she had just bought for a hundred and fifty rubles, more than twelve per cent of her year's salary. "A bargain!" she exclaimed. "An absolute bargain!" She had bought it the night before, she explained, from a Polish contrabandist—one of thousands who cross the Soviet frontier every weekend, their suitcases filled with goods from West Germany, France, Italy. Poles are able to travel abroad far more easily than Soviets, and have readier access to foreign currency. News of a Polish team's arrival, my acquaintance informed me, spreads in a matter of hours through any Soviet city. Parties are held in hotel rooms or private homes at which the goods are displayed and bought. The contrabandists use their proceeds to buy Soviet commodities scarce in Poland—electrical household appliances and gold, for instance—and resell those at high prices in their own country.

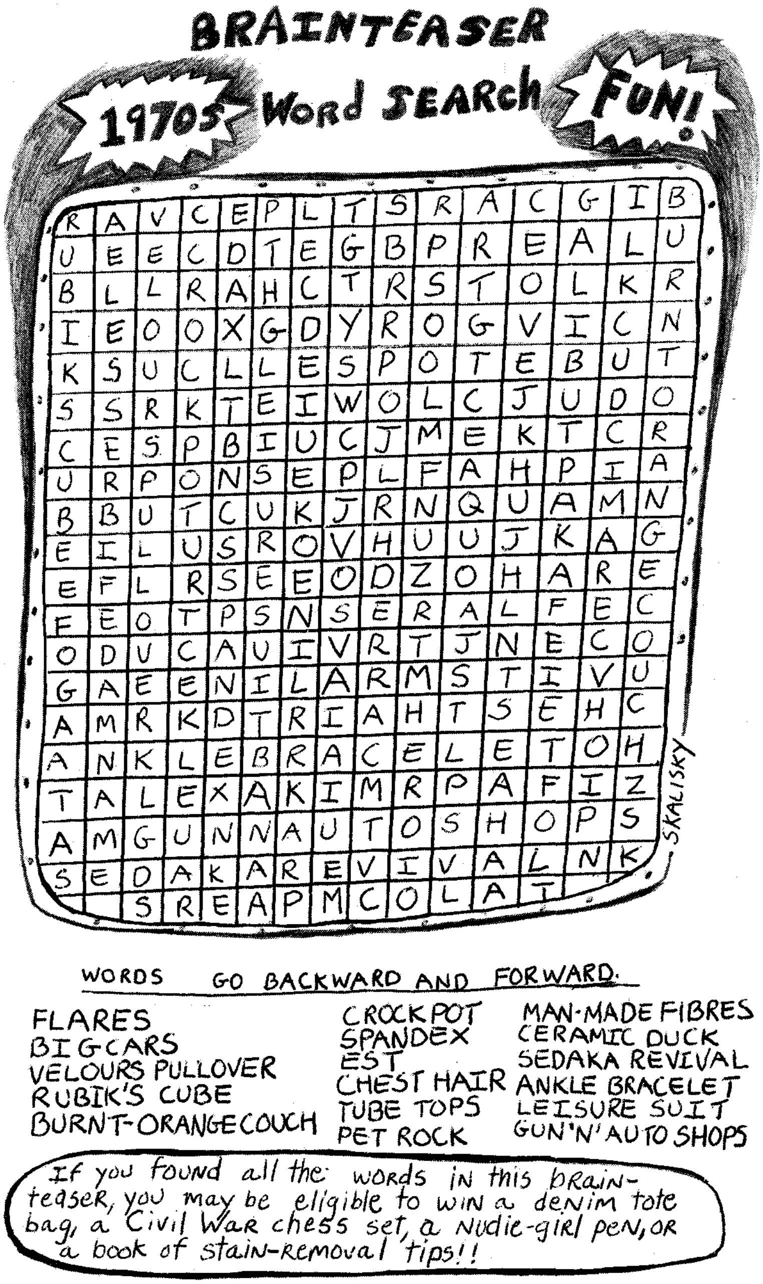
"And what a bargain, with the current black-market prices!" the floor attendant said, twirling in front of a hall mirror in her new skirt. She went on to recite a familiar litany of complaints about the uselessness of Soviet-made clothes: "Why pay eighty rubles for those shoes you see in our windows, which will fall apart in three months? And you've already had to bribe the salesgirl with a bottle of cognac to put them aside for you. So better wait for the Poles to bring you a decent pair of Austrian ones for a hundred and fifty rubles—an entire month's pay, but *how are you going to sustain your* morale except by dressing up?"

(However exorbitant these sums may seem, they fit accurately into the range of the Georgian system of *blat*—bribes, illegal payoffs, the black market. Georgia is a region whose high standard of living, one of the highest in the Soviet Union, encourages a particularly developed system of *blat*. The worst curse you can pronounce upon a Georgian is "May you have to live off your salary." In Tbilisi, a pair of American shoes, Top-Sider brand, can bring seven hundred dollars; a wool outfit from Pierre Cardin can fetch three thousand dollars—three or four times the Paris price. Those figures were given me by my Georgian friend Kakha, an ever-impeccable source of information, who was proud of his own two-thousand-dollar West German suit.)

As the floor attendant proudly displayed her modest piece of denim, I asked her for whose sake, in her opinion, Soviet women made such sacrifices to fashion. To heighten their self-esteem? To be more seductive to men?

The latter notion struck my acquaintance as hilarious. "For *men!* Do you think they ever get out of their selfish little brains to *notice* what we wear?" She twirled before the mirror again and added, "No, no. You see, life is bleak, and this is one of the few inner joys I can buy. And the girls at work—*they* will be so impressed."

To achieve some inner joy, as she put it, by being festively attired; to rise in the esteem of the predominantly female members of her work collective; and, above all, to impress those colleagues with the highest status symbol of Soviet life, a *firma*, or foreign label—these are the major reasons that our Soviet peers give for their obsession with fashion. I've met few Soviet women who will not readily admit, with a certain pride, that they accord greater importance to outward appearance than any other community of women in the world. And any American who lives for a while in the Soviet Union is in turn amazed, appalled, and awed by the passion and energy her Soviet contemporaries devote to their search for imported clothing and cosmetics: amazed and appalled, at first, that highly educated women should dedicate so many hours of the day to what many of us look on as frivolous trifles; awed, after the first weeks, when it becomes clear that their obsession with an impeccable, attractive appearance has little or nothing to do with narcissism but is more akin to the compulsive grooming instinct of a healthy cat or bird, and may be the only way of brightening the uniform drabness of Soviet life, and of establishing status in its complex hierarchy.



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One surprising result of this obsession, I discovered during my travels, is that Soviet hairdressers are among the best in the world. It can be very difficult even to get into a hairdresser's in a nation so enthralled by cosmetics: the queues begin to form at 6:30 A.M. When I reached the beauty parlor nearest my hotel in Moscow one morning at seven-thirty, I was informed that there would be a minimum of two hours' wait. But, be it in Leningrad or Irkutsk, whenever I was able to talk myself into an appointment I enjoyed some of the swiftest, most skilled hands I've ever been exposed to in the coiffure business; first-rate Hungarian and East German products; and, for the equivalent of about three dollars for a shampoo and set, an aura of amiable competence that would put to shame many beauty parlors in Paris or Rome.

A major factor in the fixation on fashion is the feudalism that prevailed in Russia until well into the nineteenth century, and the sumptuary laws that inevitably attended it. Until my own babushka's generation, specific clothes were assigned to specific classes of society, and specific hair styles distinguished married from unmarried women. Until the liberation of the serfs, in 1861, peasants could be severely chastised for putting on noblemen's clothes, and it was considered equally shocking for a nobleman to dress as a peasant. (The uproar caused by Tolstoy's plebeian costume is a case in point.) Another factor is that deep sense of inferiority toward the West, that grovelling for European style, which since the eighteenth century has led Russian women to look on Paris (and, later, Rome, Berlin, and New York) as the only reliable source of *shikarnost*, or "elegance." (The word is derived from the French *chic.*)

In the late nineteen-fifties, a few decades after the revolution imposed drab, undecodable clothing upon the Soviet masses, a new sumptuary feudalism was created by those high-ranking Party officials who were allowed to travel abroad. "From the time I was a small child, you could recognize Party bigwigs and their families from a mile away, because they were so proud of wearing foreign clothes," I was told by Tatyana Tolstaya, a thirty-eight-year-old writer, who is the great-grandniece of Leo Tolstoy and one of the shrewdest observers of Russian society I know. "They simply re-created the costume hierarchy we had under the czars."

This Party-based sumptuary code, this greed for Westernness, was greatly reinforced during the "stagnant" Brezhnev decades, when a new middle class thriving on rampant graft and corruption bought foreign black-market goods on an unprecedented scale. A pathetic current instance of this toadying to the West is a Moscow underground dedicated to the fabrication of false *firmy*. The counterfeiters copy Dior, Cardin, Calvin Klein, and Valentino labels, sew them on Soviet-made clothes, and resell them to consignment shops for exorbitant prices. The Soviet fakes fall apart within a few weeks.

Soviet women are very candid about their fixation on costume. "It's due to our terrible sense of bleakness," a producer at Riga's central television station said. "Everything about us is as drab as

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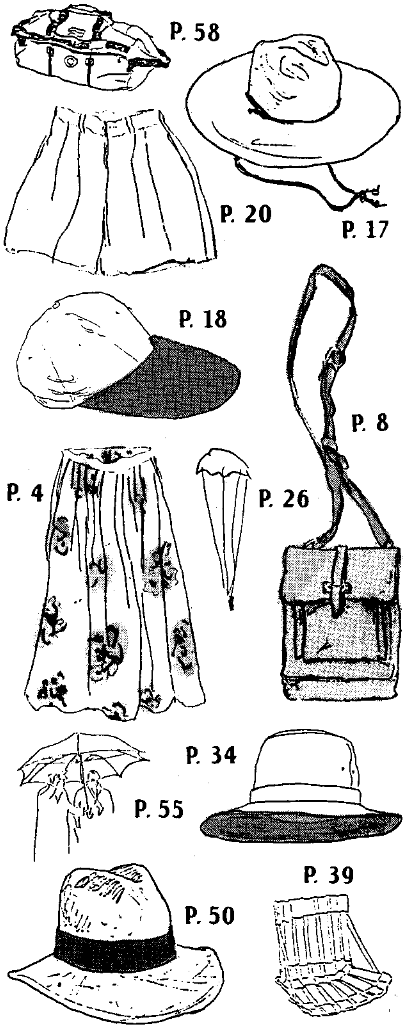

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our apartment houses—anonymous, breaking down almost at once. So decorating your outer surface is like bringing flowers inside you—it's your only way of cheering up." She added wistfully, "Well, it may also be due to the fact that our men don't seem to value us, don't behave toward us with any *manners*."

"The preoccupation with fashion may be a key to Soviet women's special strength, a source of self-esteem that our men are deprived of," Monika Zile said. "How are you going to keep up your morale if you work all day long and have a family and no mother to help out at home, and your combined work load is sixteen hours? Your only way not to fall apart is to put on your prettiest things every single morning of your life."

Tatyana Grigorevna Agafonova moved to Uzbekistan from her native Siberia in order to attend Tashkent's Art Institute. (There are only a handful of such full-fledged institutes in the Soviet Union.) She married an Uzbek man, and now works for the city's largest fashion-design collective. "For decades of our century, a person wearing a bright-green skirt to the office, or, say, an imaginative homemade hat, was singled out for reprimand, could even be sent to prison for unorthodox dress," I was told by Agafonova, whose favorite foreign couturiers are Pierre Cardin and Thierry Mugler. "This uniformity simply robbed women of their youth. So now we dress up every morning as if it were a feast day."

Talking to members of Agafonova's fashion collective, I learned that the career of *khudozhnik-modeler*, or "artist-designer," is one of the more remunerative and rigorous vocations a Soviet woman can pursue. State enterprises pay fashion collectives as much as a thousand rubles for each design that they buy to copy for the mass market. Added to the base pay of two hundred and fifty rubles a month (already equal to that of the average doctor or lawyer), these premiums can place designers in the income bracket of high civil servants and the most skilled engineers.

But the career must be preceded by seven years of demanding training in a succession of specific institutes. A two-year university degree in "artistic learning," which demands thorough mastery of draftsmanship and painting skills, is the first step. Next comes a highly competitive exam for entrance into a Faculty of Fashion Designers, which may accept only one applicant out of fifteen, and whose five-year course includes command of a foreign language and a thorough grounding in Russian art history and Russian culture.

This élitist training is an accurate indicator of the enormous importance that Soviet society has placed on fashion in the past decades. Perhaps because Soviet couture is one of the few professions that have always allowed exposure to Russia's ancient artistic traditions, its exalted state is reflected in the high intellectual level of the designers. They include some of the most cultivated women I met in the Soviet Union. It is telling, for instance, that the philosophically inclined Aleksandra Sokolova, Leningrad's star designer, is more harshly critical of her nation's fashion fixation than any other Soviet citizen I've met. "When there is such a prolonged dearth of basic commodities, the problem of dressing takes on ridiculous, monumental proportions," she said. "It's tragic that it drains us of so much energy that should be directed toward more important issues. Can you imagine the silliness—that we Soviet women, who have so little leisure, should spend hours on such empty-minded trifles as finding a second-hand blouse with a fake Saint Laurent label!"

IV

THE most startling example of *glasnost* I witnessed during my stays in the Soviet Union occurred during a meeting at a doctor's office in Tbilisi. The doctor, a gynecologist named Archil Khomasuridze, was one of the angriest of the many angry citizens I met during my visits. He was indignant because he had for so long been fighting a futile crusade to establish efficient family-planning programs throughout the Soviet Union. He was enraged by officials in Moscow's Ministry of Health who until recently refused to disseminate any birth-control information, on the ground that such measures would slow down the nation's birth rate. He was exasperated because until the Gorbachev era the prudishness imposed on the Soviet press forbade the use of even such fundamental words as "menstruation" and "prostitution." Such taboos had maintained, in Dr. Khomasuridze's words, "a level of national ignorance relating to all sexual matters equalled only by that of the most backward countries—Iraq, Iran."

Dr. Khomasuridze had already startled me by giving his estimate of the number of abortions performed in the Soviet Union: between five and eight abortions for every birth—the highest rate in the world. And then, sitting at his desk—two Georgian journalists were also attending the meeting—he suddenly accused leading members of his country's Ministry of Health of being *prestupniki*, "criminals," for having allowed abortions to proliferate by opposing birth-control programs. "They should be serving time for the harm they've done to women's health," he said.

My Georgian colleagues looked surprised, and made a few notes. The Doctor rose from his desk, walked toward me, and bent over my notes, making sure that I was spelling the names of the "criminals" correctly. "Petrovsky," he enunciated slowly, "Boris Vasilevich Petrovsky, our former Minister of Health—o,v,s,k,y. Now you've got it right."

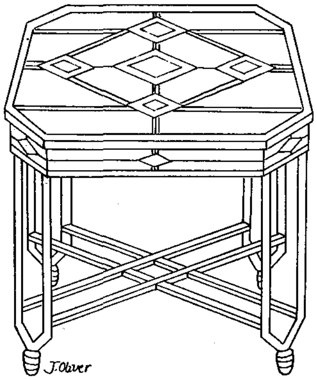
He sat down at his desk and went on, "Criminals, murderers! And they're still in power up in Moscow, continuing to ruin our national health programs. They should serve time for ruining the lives of millions of our women."

Dr. Khomasuridze is a swarthy, handsome man in his middle forties. He cares deeply about women's well-being, about the birth of healthier infants, about the need to curb the population explosion on our planet. And, sitting in his office in Tbilisi, still in the presence of several of his compatriots, he told me how he had broken his government's laws for the sake of women's health: "Our state laws demand that we write out a *napravlenie*, an official document, to register every contraceptive device or treatment a woman receives. Well, I decided that this law is harmful in a country as obscurantist as ours. I decided to treat women without this document, anonymously, without even asking their names. We made announcements in the paper to advertise our services, and here we are! No one has punished us yet."

The Doctor has a passion for statistics on all matters related to procreation, and after relating his acts of civil disobedience he gave me some detailed figures on the infrequency of contraception in the Soviet Union. "Guess how many women in this country are using some form of birth control—I'm including pills, diaphragms, IUDs, rhythm, any method available," he said. "Only eighteen per cent. But of this eighteen per cent guess how many use decent contemporary methods—the pill, IUDs. Only five per cent. That's the lowest in the world—lower than in Bhutan or in India. And what's that percentage right here in Georgia? Hold your breath. It's only three per cent."

He went on indignantly, "When will those idiots in Moscow realize that the damage done to our women by abortion is quite equal to the harm done by drug addiction, alcoholism? If women knew the harm done them by abortion, they would simply abstain from all sexual life." He leaned forward, angrily striking his desk. "Do you really want to know why so many of our doctors oppose birth control? In many areas of the Soviet Union—Georgia is one of them—much shame is still attached to abortion, and our doctors oppose birth control because they make so much money out of *criminal* abortions performed at home."

He curtly commanded one of his younger colleagues, "Bring us our treasures." Like many lonely crusaders, Khomasuridze has a stern, dictatorial streak. And his colleague, a docile young doctor who addressed his superior with filial deference, immediately presented me with a drawerful of oral contraceptives from East and West Germany, Holland, Hungary, Denmark, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Finland. "Foreign aid," Dr. Khomasuridze commented dryly. "Charitable gifts from abroad. How could you expect us to make decent medications of this kind in the Soviet Union, when we are so backward that half of our condoms still break upon first use? Our government is barely beginning to learn what human needs are."



As a doctoral candidate in the nineteen-seventies, Archil Khomasuridze, a very cosmopolitan, multilingual native of Georgia, won the Lenin Komsomol (Young Communist League) Prize for his doctoral dissertation; it is the highest national honor available to any new doctor of science, and he says he was the youngest candidate ever to receive it. He worked for some years as chief gynecologist at a Moscow hospital before returning to Tbilisi, where he had been offered the directorship of the Zhordaniya Scientific Research Institute for Human Reproduction. The institute was then a nearly defunct clinic, using antiquated methods of curing infertility; but since Khomasuridze took it over, a few years ago, he has transformed it into one of the most visionary institutions in the country and, he boasts, a collaborating center of the World Health Organization.

The original headquarters of the Zhordaniya Institute, a ramshackle three-story structure a few blocks from Tbilisi's main square, left much to be desired. Dr. Khomasuridze took a step that would have been unthinkable before Gorbachev's *perestroika*. He entered into a joint venture with West German scientists to build new facilities for his center, for which the Germans agreed to provide all building material and technological equipment; in return, Khomasuridze agreed to offer extremely inexpensive treatment to all patients sent him by his German colleagues.

Dr. Khomasuridze's dedication to curing infertility is as passionate as his crusade to lower the nation's appalling abortion rate; he is one of the first scientists in the Soviet Union to have experimented with in-vitro fertilization and artificial insemination. Yet, however advanced his techniques, many cultural handicaps still stand in his way. One such obstacle is the widespread machismo of Soviet men: they have traditionally blamed women for any instance of childlessness, overlooking the possibility that a man could be at fault. "Statistics tell us that sixty per cent of all infertility is caused by the male partner," the Doctor said. "But try to get the average Soviet male to have a sperm count! Easier to teach a bear to thread a needle. It's just another double standard of sexist behavior. Our men simply continue to torture their women with guilt feelings for being barren."

National machismo is compounded by the Soviets' deep-rooted puritanism, too, which, according to Dr. Khomasuridze, helps account for phenomenal rates of female frigidity and male impotence. "Do you know that some seventy per cent of our women have never had an orgasm?" he asked. "And that over half the Soviet women polled forthrightly state that they detest sexual contact? How can it be otherwise when parents are embarrassed to give their young the most basic information about sexuality, and our school system remains equally silent?" He added admiringly, "In your U.S.A., the rate of female frigidity is only thirty-four per cent."

Dr. Khomasuridze went on to deplore the dearth of commodities for female hygiene in his country. There are almost no sanitary napkins or tampons to be found in the Soviet Union; women must resort to wads of cotton or, on those very frequent occasions when pharmacies run out of cotton, carefully saved cotton rags. The Doctor has begged his "charitable Western friends" for ton loads of Modess and Tampax, and any he receives he distributes as prodigally throughout Georgia as he does contraceptives.

Yet there are a few incongruities in the outlook of this dauntless scientist who has dedicated his life to the health and happiness of women. Like many Soviet men, he is engaged in a distressed reëvaluation of the emancipation of women by the 1917 revolution, and he holds a deeply conservative view of their social roles. At the end of a four-hour visit, as the traditional feast of tea and Georgian pastries was brought into his office, I asked Dr. Khomasuridze if there were prejudices against women gynecologists in the Soviet Union.

"Of course there are prejudices, as well there should be," he replied. "The brainier the woman, the more she tends to prefer men doctors, because our best specialists are clearly men. As you know, over seventy-five per cent of the Soviet doctors are women, but they just don't work well. Their children get sick, they take those days off, they take more time off to have babies, they get behind in their research, they're useless to us."

He continued, in a lecturing tone, "In every area of nature, in each species of animal and plant life, there is a specific function that is akin to a vocation, a calling. Snakes, say, must move by crawling on the ground. The clematis vine will only grow up a steep wall. And woman's first calling is to educate her family. Men will never be able to do it as well as women, never. You need that fine female touch. What would be the future of the planet if women ceased to look on family as their first priority? Kaput! Here at this clinic, I have officially declared that I don't accept *women doctors on my staff*. Let them complain, let them feel abused . . ."

The Doctor suddenly looked at me with a certain terror, perhaps aware that such views are not popular in the United States.

"Forgive me, please forgive me. Of course, there may be some exceptions."

I told him, perhaps stonily, that he had already done a great deal for women.

"Thank you, thank you," he said, still trying to pacify me. "I shall continue to refuse employing women, for their own sake."

I encountered this prejudice against women doctors throughout the Soviet Union, regardless of class or ethnic background, or even gender.

"I gave birth to two children, one with a man doctor and another with a woman, and what a difference!" a journalist in Irkutsk told me. "How much more powerful and gentler the man!"

Even Olga Lipovskaya, the feminist editor, and one of the most prominent women's-rights activists in Leningrad (she deems herself the only one in the city), echoed this prejudice. "Soviet women doctors can carry the patriarchal mentality more brutally than men. They're under great pressure to be even harsher."

The abortion experiences of Olga Lipovskaya are precisely the kind that Dr. Khomasuridze wishes to eradicate from Soviet life. Olga is a wiry, beautiful woman in her late thirties. She has been married three times, has two children, and has had seven abortions. She estimates that she will have had about fourteen abortions "before it's all

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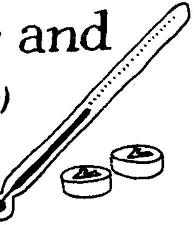

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over"; she considers fourteen to be the national average, and knows some women who have had twenty-five. The ignorance of birth-control methods in the Soviet Union is such, she reports, that among her friends the most popular contraceptive formulas are still (1) douching with the juice of a lemon after intercourse and (2) jumping off a refrigerator when one's period is three days late.

Describing her visits to a Leningrad abortion clinic, Olga said, "You stand in line at the door of the operating room, seven or eight of you, waiting to be admitted. The clinic's staff is too busy to do anything but operate, so as each woman who's finished staggers out you take turns getting out of line for a few minutes, just to help her get to the rest room down the hall. When it's your turn, you go into a hall splattered with blood, where two doctors are aborting seven or eight women at the same time; they're usually very rough and rude, shouting at you about keeping your legs wide open, and so on. If you're lucky, they give you a little sedative, mostly Valium. Then it's your turn to stagger out to the rest room, but you're not allowed to spend more than two hours there, because the production line, you see, is always very busy."

Olga added, "We've been brought up to look on abortion as salubrious, almost 'cleansing,' and on birth-control devices as harmful and unreliable."

According to the Soviet Ministry of Health, there are between one and two abortions for every birth in the Soviet Union—already five or six times as many as in the United States—but the Ministry's statistics include only legal abortions. Dr. Khomasuridze's more realistic estimate of between five and eight abortions for every birth takes into account the large number of dangerous, unregistered operations performed for bribes in private homes (many women choose this alternative to insure proper anesthesia), and also the abortions carried out in conservative regions, where the procedure is still seen as shameful—Georgia, Armenia, Central Asia.

Dr. Khomasuridze's statistics are consistent with United Nations data, which stated in 1987 that among the world's developed nations the Soviet Union provided the second-lowest amount of birth-control information,

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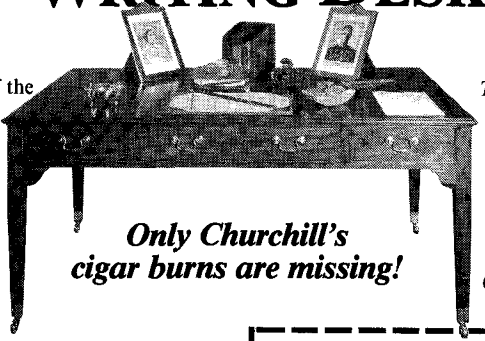

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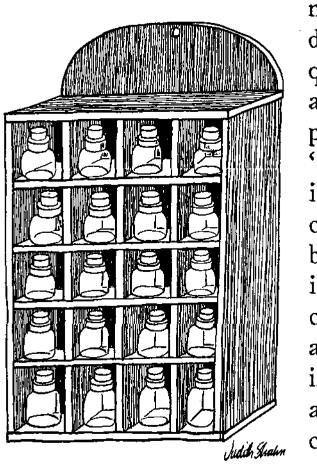
being surpassed in ignorance only by Romania. And my conversations with other honest specialists confirmed Khomasuridze's alarmist views of Soviet gynecology. The dedicated Dr. Evgeny Volpin, who directs the maternity clinic my friends regard as the finest in Moscow, candidly admitted the many flaws and deficiencies in his field of medicine.

Dr. Volpin is a forthright, genial man in his fifties who much admires our medical system. On a wall of his office, close to the inevitable portrait of Lenin, there hangs a large American poster of a chimpanzee dressed in a surgeon's smock and sitting at a desk, with the slogan "The Boss Is Always Right" above his head. "As you probably know, an IUD can be used by only one out of three women—women with absolutely perfect organs," he told me. "And only a small number of foreign-made IUDs—extremely few—have been available to us in the past three years. As for the diaphragm, it's not popular here because we manufacture only the metal kind, which can do great harm to the cervix."

Unlike Dr. Khomasuridze, Dr. Volpin is opposed to oral contraceptives because he believes that their side effects are still unclear. ("Why should the woman take the risks? Why should she always be the one to suffer?") So while pressuring the Soviet Ministry of Health to manufacture better diaphragms he restricts himself to advising rhythm and condoms (called "galoshes" in the Soviet Union). "But, unfortunately, our condoms are of wretched quality, and the production does not equal the demand," he said. "All this contributes to the tragic number of deaths we've had from unregistered abortions, of which one out of five is fatal."



Dr. Volpin is also candid about the severe flaws in obstetrical care in his country. Some current data show that over two and a half per cent of Soviet infants do not live beyond their first year, a figure that puts the Soviet Union in fiftieth place for infant-mortality rate, right alongside Barbados; and that an increasing number of babies suffer from brain damage traceable to birth trauma. Volpin puts the blame for these flaws on a lack of facilities and specialists. According to Volpin, nearly half of Moscow's maternity clinics do not meet government sanitary standards. He says that even his clinic, which has the lowest infant-mortality rate in the capital (half of one per cent), would have to double its staff and space in order to function as he would like it to. "It is our nation's gigantism that makes our medicine so unwieldy," he said. "You suffer from the same problem of bigness, but you handle it better. Ah, to attain the low infant-mortality rate of excellent little Japan, that is our dream, our utopia." Japan, with its technological efficiency, creative labor incentives, and well-planned human services—features that Soviet society is notably deprived of—seems to have become a utopia in the eyes of many progressive Soviet citizens.

But in gynecology, as in many other fields, *glasnost*-era candor such as Khomasuridze's and Volpin's alternates with instances of chauvinistic hypocrisy equal to any in the darkest Stalin years. One such instance was provided by the head doctor at a maternity clinic in Tashkent—a loyal Party apparatchik with a chestful of government decorations and a despotic manner, whom I quickly came to think of as Dragon Lady. She displayed great pride in her "brand-new modern clinic." Although it had been completed only the year before, handles were falling off doors, floors and ceilings, built at crazily askew angles, were cracking, concrete shower stalls and bathrooms had the cheerfulness of prison facilities, and surgical containers consisted of worn enamel kitchen pails. Sitting in her office under a larger than usual portrait of Lenin, Dragon Lady tried to force-feed me a laudatory official line about Soviet gynecology. "*Of course* we have IUD spirals, an abundance of them, made right here in the Soviet Union," she said. "We put the orders in by the tens of thousands. We distribute them to all our pharmacies."

I remarked that doctors in New York, Paris, Moscow, and Tbilisi had told me that only one woman out of three could tolerate a spiral.

"In my clinic, *every single* woman can get to use the spiral," she retorted. "If her cervix gets inflamed, we heal it and put the spiral right back in. If it causes cysts, we operate on them, and then back in with the spiral. We can fix *any* contraindication."

I mentioned the dearth of tampons and sanitary napkins which plagued all my Soviet women friends.

"But they must be too lazy to go to the pharmacies," she countered. "Go to any pharmacy. If the tampons are not there today, they will be tomorrow."

Unwittingly, Dragon Lady exposed one of the aspects of Soviet gynecology most startling to foreign visitors—the practice of having several women simultaneously give birth in a single delivery room. Dr. Volpin had told me that such crowding was due to insufficient facilities and staff, and that having one mother give birth per delivery room, as in the United States and Western Europe, would be ideal. But Tashkent's Dragon Lady again shrouded the issue. She assured me that there were no more than two operating tables in each of her clinic's delivery rooms, and that reports of more than two women ever giving birth in the same area were just another example of "anti-Soviet propaganda."

She then gave me a tour of her hospital. "And now," she said proudly, "you will actually see the miracle *happening*." She triumphantly opened the door to a delivery room: three women lay there side by side, their stomachs so distended that they must have been in the final half hour of labor. They were attended by only one midwife: she casually strolled from one to another of the stoically moaning women, and bellowed at them to push harder. Dragon Lady swiftly closed the door, her face a study in discomfiture.

An equally curious feature of the Soviet maternity system is that in nearly every clinic new mothers are forbidden to see their husbands or relatives at any time during their hospital stay. When one visits such institutions, one inevitably passes a group of young men standing anxiously outside the clinic entrance, waiting for a nurse to lean out of an upstairs window and give them a shout of "A boy!"

or "A girl!" Dragon Lady upheld this custom as one more instance of the Soviet Union's superior hygienic precautions. "We wouldn't think of letting men into our clinic," she said. "Papa might have a cold or an angina, or wear dirty clothes! It would take too much time to redress him head to toe. Our holy duty is to protect the child by maintaining utterly sterile conditions." She added, "Besides, many women do not *want* to see their husbands at such a time. Our women are coquettish, they don't have their proper cosmetics here."

"It would certainly be far better for the women's morale, but, for the time being, our clinics are far too restricted in space and staff to handle visitors," I was later told by the ever-candid Dr. Volpin. Like some other progressive doctors, he has installed in his clinic a system of videophones, which enable young couples to see electronic images of each other while they talk, and give fathers a first glimpse of their newborns.

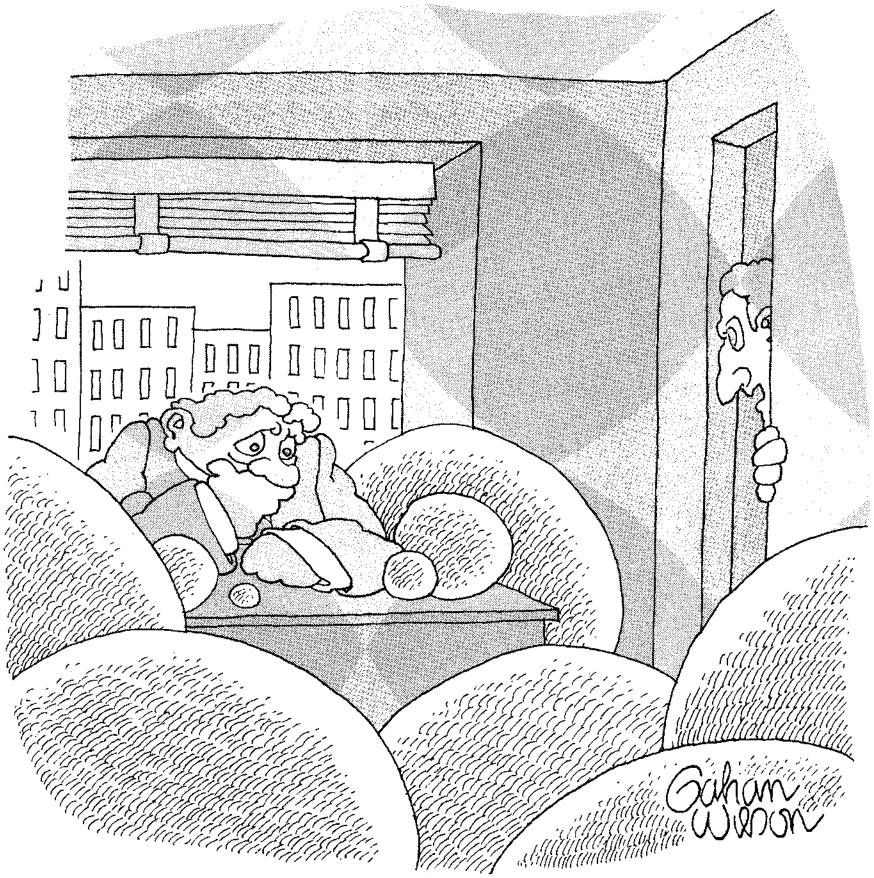
As for training programs that enable husbands to assist at their babies' birth, they exist in only one hospital in the Soviet Union, at Maternity Clinic No. 1, in Riga. This hospital also claims to be the only one in the nation in which a select number of husbands—those who have completed the "family birthing" training offered expectant fathers—are allowed to visit their wives after the baby is born. The approach is looked upon as strictly experimental: because of the nation's lack of trained specialists, and its extreme puritanism, the technique might be totally unsuitable for the rest of the country. Even in Riga, a city whose relatively progressive ethos is rooted in Western Europe, only some ten per cent of women who are offered the "family birthing" alternative choose to use it. "How could you expect such an advanced method in Siberia or Central Asia, where many maternity hospitals are run by one woman doctor and one nurse?" the director of the Latvian clinic remarked to me. "Very few of us have the time, the space, the skill, the energy to adopt it."

One of the greatest ironies of the Soviet Union's backwardness in the field of gynecology is that it was in that country that the technique of "painless childbirth" originated, several decades ago. The Frenchman who popularized it in the West, Dr. Fernand Lamaze, had learned the concept in the Soviet Union in the early nineteen-fifties, from Soviet scientists. The guiding principle of the method is that women can prevent pain by overcoming anxiety and fear, and by maintaining total control over the way they give birth. But precisely opposite conditions prevail today in Soviet medicine: women have little or nothing to say about the conduct of their labor. Those who wish to remain conscious may be forced to have an injection that puts them into deep sleep, and those who long for relief may be denied it. As I visited maternity clinics throughout the Soviet Union, I kept recalling stories I had heard from Soviet women friends about the terrors of their experiences in giving birth.

An acquaintance of mine in Moscow whose delicate pregnancy needed clinical observation was assigned to a ward filled with women recovering from badly performed abortions. (Her sister was so shaken by that episode that she didn't report for any gynecological examination until the eighth month of her first pregnancy, whereupon she received crude reprimands from the doctors.)

"The doctors keep yelling at you, 'Get on with it! Get on with it!' " my friend Kseniya Velembovskaya, mother of a teen-age daughter, reported. "The treatment is inevitably rough, impersonal, crass, as in a production line. We're treated as if sex and birth were a big crime. There was so much pain that I had nightmares about it for many years afterward. The brutality of our maternity wards is the best contraceptive method we have. Very few of us want to *ever* go through it again."

My visits to Soviet maternity wards confirmed my friends' reports. Apart from a few admirable clinics in Riga and Dr. Volpin's in Moscow, they were appalling in their lack of warmth or personal attention and their often slovenly conditions: there are frequently no bathing or shower facilities in the wards; the sheets of nursing mothers' beds, and their shabby hospital gowns, are often smeared with blood, the linen having obviously re-



"There are far too many balls in your court, Brintner!"

• •

mained unchanged days after delivery.

But my most vivid impressions are of the melancholy, depressed faces of the young mothers in those forlorn clinics, in which I never saw a sign of awareness of women's practical or emotional needs: no personal nightgown or robe is allowed, nor is any flower or card or photograph or other token of home. Not one object that might console new mothers for the absence of their loved ones is allowed to taint a Soviet maternity ward's supposed "sterility." I seldom saw a single smile or heard a happy voice in these institutions; I saw only a glum, resigned stoicism and desolate faces. Instead of acknowledging the happiest and most fragile moments of women's lives, these wards run by women doctors expressed only the joylessness and general inefficiency of Soviet life, and a nation's curious lack of concern for its citizens' psychic health.

Even red-faced Tashkent babies lying tightly swaddled, neck to toe, in tawdry metal cribs looked tragic. Dr. Volpin is adamantly opposed to swaddling, which he believes can cause serious damage to the infant's lungs; but he admits that the archaic practice, common in most parts of the Soviet Union, is extremely hard to eradicate. Tashkent's Dragon Lady is dedicated to the custom. "The swaddling keeps them quiet," she curtly explained.

Why the phenomenal backwardness on the issue of women's and children's health? I kept asking this question throughout my trip. Why the inability, on the part of such a technologically advanced nation, to develop even a modest system of birth control?

"What do you mean, 'advanced'?" most of my acquaintances would retort in the fashionably self-depreciating manner of the Gorbachev era. "We're lagging at least twenty years behind you in almost every area of technology." And they would go on to say, "Don't you realize that in the past decades our official goals were 'Defending the Nation State,' 'Building Communism,' our only priorities defense and tractors? An issue such as personal health was about No. 137 on our list of national priorities."

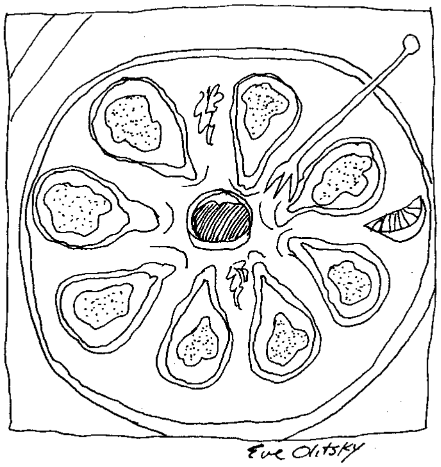
The decline of standards in Soviet gynecology and obstetrics must be seen in a wider context—the general deterioration of Soviet medicine. It was once filled with heroic achievements—infant-mortality rates dropped by two-thirds between 1913 and 1950, a historic record—but is now rife with hair-raising tales of neglect. The flaws may be due in part to doctors' low pay; their average earnings are two hundred and fifty rubles a month—strikingly out of proportion to the four hundred and fifty or more rubles earned by a skilled industrial worker.

A computer specialist in Leningrad whose young son has severe asthma told me that she has never been able to consult more than once with the same pediatrician at the district clinic to which she is officially assigned; thus her very ill child has been denied any consistent medical care.

A publishing executive in Siberia told me that she had severe cardiac fibrillations and a blood pressure of 180 over 120. She had never heard the word "cholesterol," and no doctor had ever instructed her to restrict her intake of animal fats or salt.

Cholesterol measurement and dietary precautions were equally absent from the regime of a thirty-eight-year-old Moscow journalist whose blood pressure was also alarmingly high. Powerful sedative medications had been prescribed for her, but she had not been told that driving a car when she took them might be dangerous.

The slipshod care offered to these members of the professional élite makes one shudder to think of the treatment given less privileged citizens. A popular saying about the Soviet medical system is "*Lechitsya darom, darom lechitsya*" ("Free treatment isn't worth a cent"). If 1988 laws permitting private coöperative clinics are not encouraged, one can safely predict that citizens will continue to resort to the time-honored Soviet custom of medical *blat*—bribing doctors to make house calls, and bribing hospital nurses to obtain even such rudimentary comforts as bedpans, clean sheets, and towels.



Eve Olitsky

V

NONNA VOLENKO and I visited Tashkent's Governmental Day Care Center No. 440 in midafternoon, when the children had finished their nap and were beginning a play period. During my stays in the Soviet Union, I had been hearing about the deterioration of government day-care centers, which has been exposed with increasing candor by the *glasnost* press. But this center in Tashkent is reserved for the children of members of one particular work collective—a prosperous fashion-design workshop directly across the street which helps to subsidize it—and it seemed to be a model one. (The quality of care offered by Soviet preschool programs depends largely on the wealth and status of the professional groups that subsidize them. A friend of mine who as a child attended a center for the offspring of Central Committee members reports having had caviar for breakfast every morning.) Like most of the nation's preschools, the daycare center I visited in Tashkent functions from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M., to accommodate the needs of working mothers.

When Nonna and I entered the cheerful, impeccably neat playroom of the preschool, I noticed that as the children, four- and five-year-olds, ran toward their caretaker the girls gathered at the very front of the group, while the boys hovered in back.

"Well, my kittens," the caretaker said. "Aren't you going to say hello?"

"*Zdravstvuyte*," the children said, the girls' voices several decibels louder than the boys'.

"And next let's have some questions," the caretaker went on. "Aren't you going to ask our guests about the big trip they took to see us?"

Half a dozen girls immediately stepped up to the very head of the group, asking our names and how many days it had taken us to drive from our homes to Tashkent. As we talked, two of them grabbed objects from a nearby table as presents for us: a paper flower, a toy broom. Other girls followed suit, until the room was a mayhem of their greetings and gift-giving, and the supervisor gently remonstrated that they could draw special presents for us in a few minutes, but mustn't give away school belongings, even to the nicest visitors.

During this hospitable demonstration, the nine boys in the group hovered uncertainly at the back of the room, some fiddling with small toys, others just standing about, their hands behind their backs, craning their necks left and right to see what the other fellows were doing. "Well, has the cat got your tongue, my pigeons?" the caretaker said to the boys, with an edge of reprimand. "How could it be that *you* don't have any questions?"

The boys continued gaping at me sideways, their eyes averted each time I tried to meet their gaze, nudging each other with awkward grins as the teacher pressed on: "What's the trouble with my little lambs? Did you get up on the wrong side of the bed? Come, come, one nice little question."

By this time, the girls were all over me, riffling, at my invitation, through my pocketbook and camera equipment, asking to see photographs of my own children and pennies from my country. But, however much she urged, the caretaker could not get one word out of the boys, who throughout our hour's visit would hold back, silent, undecided, diffident. This pattern would be more or less repeated among any group of youngsters I gathered with throughout the Soviet Union. The aggressiveness of Soviet women, I was beginning to notice, begins very early in life, whatever their ethnic background.

While we were having tea with the center's head supervisor, a group of caretakers, and three mothers, they explained that outsiders had to register their child at birth to apply to this particular preschool, and then go through a complicated and seldom successful exchange system. "If an employee of our collective lives far away, she could put her child in a center near her home in exchange for our taking the child of a family who lives near her," one mother said, using a special motion of the hand which in Soviet body language implies that the exchange might involve some *blat*—tipping, illegal payoffs. "But that takes a lot of string-pulling."

We went on to talk about the caretakers' handling of the children's behavior problems. I found that the women held rigid views on the innate goodness of all children. ("There isn't a mean streak in any child. All children are uniformly good. There are only bad caretakers.") I also noted that they employed a heavy-handed method of shaping the youngsters' view of good and evil. One caretaker told me, "We read them fairy tales and say, 'This character is evil, mean, cruel, and this one is kind, softhearted. Which one do you like better?' And the children always say that they love the softhearted character best."

The women were unanimous on the issue of sex differences: there was a chorus of praise for girls' conduct, and not one mention of boys'. "Little girls are such tender little things, all so soft, so good and tender," one of the mothers said. "That's not just the way we raise them here. Cruelty simply doesn't *exist* in little girls."

I asked the mothers and caretakers what kind of language the children used when they had been naughty. "Oh, they use the Lenin oath," one mother answered. "How endearing that is!" When I asked about the "Lenin oath," it was explained that a boy or girl who had misbehaved always said, "I promise I won't ever do it again. I give my Lenin oath."

"It's the holiest of pledges to them, truly sacred," one of the mothers said. "Even a five-year-old who wants to swear that he has told the truth raises his hand and says, 'Honest as a Leninist!' "

The mother and the day-care workers clapped their hands and laughed, praising the dear creatures who had already developed such a high sense of patriotism. I asked them for the words of the Lenin song I had heard the children singing. One of the caretakers—the music teacher—eagerly ran through it for me in a clear, lovely voice while Nonna wrote down the words. Here are excerpts from it:

In this communal room, no one is ever bored,
For in the most visible place hangs the portrait of Lenin.
To you, happy children, he opens the wide world,
He looks at us with a big smile, as if about to speak.
Be happy, little ones,
Grandchildren of the October Revolution.

The women were obviously moved to see their foreign guest learning the words of one of their children's favorite songs.

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alive," one mother said. "That's why he recurs so much in their conversation. For instance, they often say to each other, 'You can fool me, that's one thing, but you can't fool Lenin.' "

"Yes," another agreed. "Until our children are six or seven, they totally believe that Vladimir Ilyich is alive!"

"So how do the kids take it when they learn that he's really *not* alive?" I asked.

The day-care workers looked at each other uncertainly. "They must learn about it at home," one said. "We don't know for sure how or when it happens."

"It usually happens the first time they see an old film of Lenin's death on television," a mother suggested, "and they see the tears on the faces of workers attending the funeral."

"The boys take it far harder—it affects them deeply," the head supervisor admitted. "I had one little boy who came in crying so hard one morning—he'd seen it on television the night before. 'I've lost my best friend,' he wept. 'I've lost Vladimir Ilyich.' That child wasn't himself for several weeks."

VI

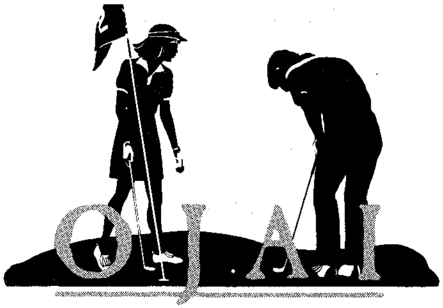
THROUGHOUT my stays in the Soviet Union, I kept remembering these early glimpses of male passivity and disillusionment, of female power and self-esteem, while talking to the few scholars who are beginning to research patterns of sex differences in Soviet society. Because of the distaste for such analysis that prevails in any Marxist state, it is an area of psychology that has been virtually untouched in the Soviet Union until recently.

Olga Voronina, my philosopher friend in Moscow who is one of the even smaller group of scholars who consider themselves "feminists" (she estimates that no more than twenty women in Moscow would accept that label), views the situation this way: Soviet girls are favored by teachers from the earliest preschool days, because, having stronger role models, they are more obedient than boys and do far better in school. "Even in such patriarchal organizations as Pioneer groups, until the age of fourteen or so the girls were always far more active—I say 'were' because the popularity of such Party organizations has much decreased lately," she said. "Look at their role models: mother often alone at home ruling the roost, an all-female cast of teachers, and, all around them, women handling the double shift of career and home. The girls absorb this female energy and are more active on every level throughout their school years. But as they reach adolescence they tend consciously to slow down, and curb themselves; they think an overactive woman is less appealing. Well, God only knows how aggressive we'd be if we *didn't* curb ourselves a little bit!"

"I know that a majority of public-school teachers in the U.S.A. are also women," my friend Elvira Novikova, another feminist scholar, said. "But it's a Soviet phenomenon for teachers to favor girls as much as we do. That creates a pattern of anti-social behavior among boys. It leads them to feel that it's not 'cool' to get good grades, and it reinforces their resentment of women. A boy's ego is further undermined because he spends most of his time at home with his mother; his father—if he has one—is often too passive or too macho or not sensitive enough to deal with a child's problems and become a proper role model."

"Our young men have gone out into the world with the attitude that they're little boys, still under the wings of their mommies," said Monika Zile, the magazine editor. "When they've had to take a responsibility or make a decision, a woman has always stepped in to take over."

Mariya Osorina, a Leningrad psychologist, offered more complex historical reasons for what one could call "the Powerful Woman Syndrome" in Russian society. She sees a breaking point in nineteenth-century history, in the Decembrist rebellion of 1825: when that first wave of political dissent was brutally crushed by the czar, Russia's male intelligentsia lost much of its self-esteem, began to feel marginal and helpless before an immutable authoritarian regime. She also believes that the deepest traditions of Russian culture—the high value on inner emotional life, the life of the spirit—are far more feminine than those of most other nations. "Compare our traditional values, for instance, with the very masculine, pragmatic, utilitarian German ethos," she said. "For some eight centuries, we praised and upheld all that was connected with *dukhovnye tsennosty*—'spiritual values'—and we were taught



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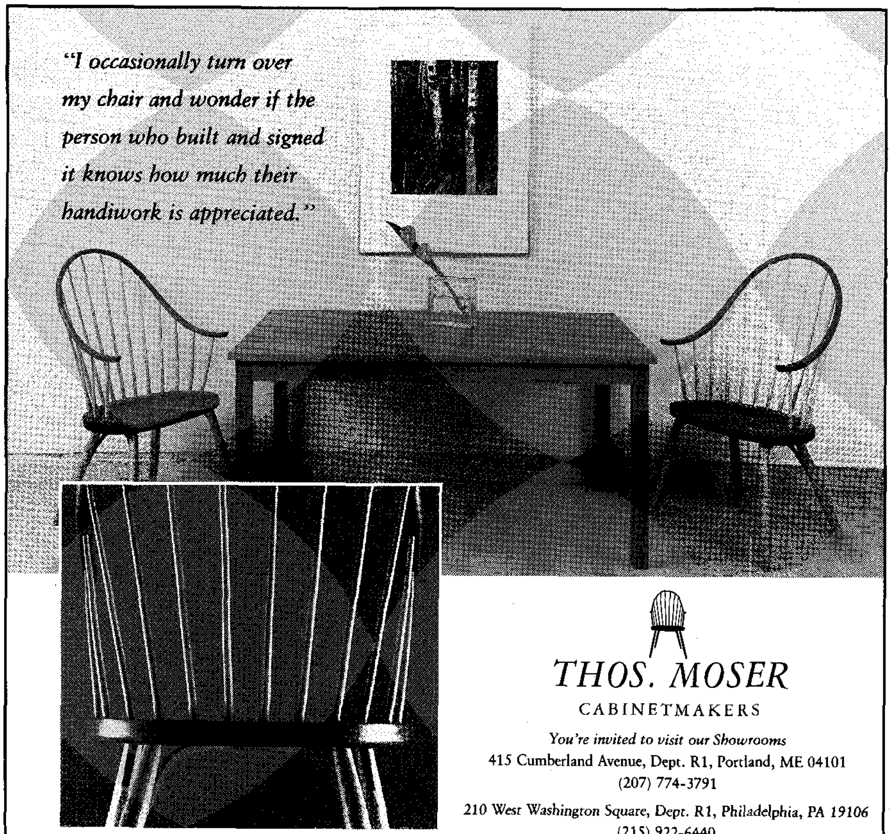
to disdain most practical aspects of existence. This reverence for values associated with the female principle gave women an immense psychic power, even through the feudalism and repression that lasted until the late nineteenth century, even before they were allowed to have schooling and careers. Ironically, the union of feminine and national values has continued right into post-revolutionary times. Teachers have favored girls because their behavior is more closely modelled on the Soviet system of social values—on communitarian obedience, orderliness, altruism, dutifulness."

On all levels of Soviet society, one is constantly impressed by women's keen sense of their greater patience, diligence, optimism, endurance, shrewdness, and self-esteem—a self-esteem apparently heightened by the very arduousness of their everyday duties, their incessant foraging for basic necessities of food and clothing. This sense of female superiority is summed up with eerie precision by a Russian proverb: "Women can do everything; men can do the rest."

What are some other reasons that make it easier for women than for men to grow into powerful, responsible citizens with superior work habits? When answering that question today, in the *glasnost* era, most Soviet citizens feel free to put the blame on their nation's history: through centuries of serfdom and seven decades of dictatorship, men have never had a chance to develop their initiative.

In a culture in which men have never felt themselves to be masters of their fates, never felt any real worth in their work, "how could they ever become responsible?" Monika Zile asks. "Women, on the other hand, kept right on ruling over their little domestic kingdoms, and never suffered an equal sense of helplessness. And at the time of the revolution, when only some ten per cent of our women were literate, they had to take such huge leaps that somehow they just kept leaping on and on, bypassing the men in many ways—in levels of education, of steadfastness, and, particularly, of diligence."

Soviet women's remarkable self-assurance (not to say their superiority complex) leads to an often derisive view of men that might make the most committed American feminist uncomfortable. I felt it painfully during a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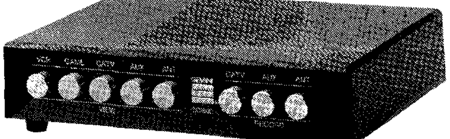

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discussion with a group of women who were television producers in Riga. They had expressed the recurring complaint of *peregruzhennost*, "over-burdening," and one member of the group had cited some striking figures that are often mentioned in women's conversations: Soviet husbands have some thirty hours more free time a week than their wives, enjoying a total of nearly two "stolen days"; women, because of their chores, enjoy one hour less sleep at night than men; and women have an average of only twelve minutes a day to spend on their children's education.

I asked my Riga acquaintances what the average man might be doing with that free time.

The group burst into raucous laughter.

"He takes out the dog," one said. (Much giggling.)

"He looks at television and occasionally remembers to play with the children," a second one said. ("Yes, yes!" and hoots of derision.)

"He mostly takes out the dog," a third one repeated. (More laughter.)

"He tinkers with the car." (Further hilarity.)

"He tinkers with the car to *pretend* he's doing something." (More approving laughter.)

Analyzing the mysterious force of Russian females and the relative passivity of Russian men, some of the more thoughtful women I talked to put the blame on their own sex. "Russian women have a need to control that verges on the tyrannical, the sadistic," said Elvira Osipova, a professor of British and American literature at Leningrad State University, and a wise observer of national habits. "If our men can't manage to curb the aggressive, sadistic element in their spouses' characters, women will always end up tyrannizing over them, like no other women I can think of in history."

After dozens of evenings spent with distraught, henpecked men and with a dismaying abundance of superwomen, I reached the conclusion that the Soviet Union might be as much in need of a men's movement as of a women's movement. I tried out the idea on some of my female acquaintances, and found it very well received.

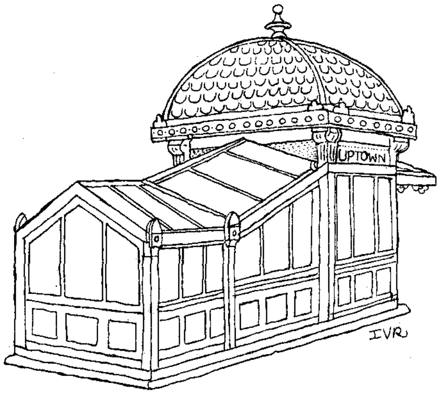
"The principal function of a women's movement in this country would be to quiet our women down, make them more capable of reassuring their men," Mariya Osorina said. "A good feminist movement would make our women more gentle, restore the sexes to that fine balance they had in Pushkin's time. . . . Look at the Decembrist men—powerful, positive heroes, with heroic, strong, but gentle wives."

"With emancipation, we not only freed ourselves but created a generation in which too many women tried to be the heads of families," I was told by a Riga marriage counsellor named Anna Livmane. "Excuse the rudeness, but I shall put it this way: Man should always be the Minister of Exterior Affairs, the woman should be the Minister of Interior Affairs. Now women try too often to be both kinds of minister, and men, who are lazier by nature, withdraw."

Thus one of the important benefits of *perestroika*, many Soviet citizens would agree, is that by freeing women from some part of their historic double burden it may allow them to step back and relax. "*Perestroika* is about waking up the *lichnost*—'individualism'—in our men, so that they cease feeling superfluous," Monika Zile said. "It is about creating a society of less aggressive females, who can at last regain their womanliness."

VII

ONE day in Leningrad, a few hours after arriving from Riga, Nonna Volenko and I found ourselves in the apartment of an attractive and affable woman, a program editor at the local television station, who lived alone with a twenty-year-old daughter. "My husband couldn't stand my having a career equal to his, my earning a salary larger than his," she said as she served us tea from an old-fashioned samovar that stood on a table in her living room. "My success threatened him terribly. He began forcing me to make a choice between marriage and career, and, of course, I chose my career." She added casually, "That wasn't a difficult choice at all."



On my hostess's living-room couch sat her daughter, a determined-looking university student in faded bluejeans. "Mama was right on target," she said. "She's just like my generation. Here's the way our order of priorities goes: first, career; second, a child. As for a man, that's irrelevant. He can go on his way as soon as the child is conceived."

On my left sat a smart, handsome, cool-mannered young man, a graduate student named Vadim who had been assigned by the local Goskomizdat to guide us through his city. A few hours earlier, Nonna and I had been asking Vadim, who is in his late twenties, which domestic responsibilities he felt ready to take on when he married. He had previously been aloof, but his aloofness had melted as he described his love of children and vaunted his gift for cooking. "I'm a good chef," he said, with pride. "I've watched my mother make borscht, shchi, kisel, and pirozhki, and I can make them almost as well as she can."

I asked him whether his father also had domestic talents.

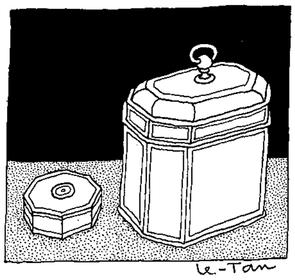
His reserved manner immediately returned. "I've never met my father," he said curtly.

Now, at the television editor's home in Leningrad, as I sampled my hostess's delicious homemade cake, I thought about some impressive Latvian women I'd met earlier that week.

There was Dasya, our Riga guide. She was an athletic young woman who lived alone with her mother, an engineer. As we toured the city's superbly restored medieval landmarks, whose Westernness manifests Latvia's centuries-old links with Germany and Scandinavia, I'd asked Dasya if her father also lived in Riga. "Yes, he does," she had replied, as curtly as Vadim would later. "But I've seen him only a few times in my life."

On our first morning in Riga, Dasya had taken us to visit Monika Zile, who lives with her teen-age daughter and her mother. "My family is a mirror image of our national matriarchate," Monika had said. "My husband's father was killed in the war, and he and his four siblings grew up with only a mother. My husband and I were divorced after seventeen years of marriage. At some point, a jealousy sprang up between us—but he still helps to bring up my daughter. My mother lives with me, and also helps to bring up my daughter.” She sighed, and then said, “You see, thirty, forty years after the war we seem to continue this all-woman tradition through sheer force of habit. I fear that my daughter will follow my example, take me as a model. Our matriarchal ways have become chronic, infectious.”

Another Rigan I had been much impressed by was Dr. Anita Tsaune, the head gynecologist at a maternity clinic in Riga which is regarded as the finest in the Soviet Union. Dr. Tsaune, an attractive divorcée in her early fifties with a beehive of teased blond hair, is also the director of the Maternal and Child Health Protection Agency for the entire republic of Latvia. She had given me an account of her daily morning schedule.



“I live alone with Mama, who is a wonderful eighty-nine years old,” Dr. Tsaune had said. “And the first thing I do when I get up, at six, is prepare breakfast for Mama, and rearrange the flowers and change their water so that everything will be ready and pretty and cheerful for her when she gets up. All her life, she got breakfast for me and my children, so I do that for her. Then I get to work by seven-thirty, and since I live across the street from the maternity clinic I go home for lunch, and give Mama a chance to show her love for me.”

Dr. Tsaune and her assistant director, Dr. Sarmite Khartmane, an equally attractive divorcée, who was once a slalom ski champion, are pioneers in “family birthing,” the psychological preparation of both husband and wife for their baby’s delivery. Sitting in the flower-filled office of these archetypal Soviet superwomen—ebullient, brilliant, and intensely feminine—I had teased them about the prevalence of women on their staff, for during an hour’s visit at their clinic I had not seen one male doctor.

“Oh, yes, we have a few men doctors,” Dr. Tsaune said, laughing. “A few tall, thin, very handsome men. We keep them around as a tonic. Without any men, women don’t dress as well, don’t behave as nicely.”

“So the men are here for decoration?” I asked.

“The men are a tonic,” she repeated.

“Like a Finnish sauna?”

“Yes, that’s it. They’re like a Finnish sauna!” Hearty laughter from all the women.

A few moments later, I asked the two divorcées whether they envied women with husbands.

“A husband, that’s, how can I say . . .” Dr. Tsaune hesitated.

“It’s an elective obligation,” Dr. Khartmane suggested.

Approving laughter again greeted these views of man-as-disposable-commodity. “Absolutely correct, an elective obligation,” Dr. Tsaune repeated.

Later, at the Leningrad tea party, I recalled a description given by my friend Elvira Novikova of the only unhappy days in her life: “They’re the summer days when Mama is at our little dacha out of town, and I worry about her so much I can barely work. She’s alone there, seventy-nine years old, and I call her several times a day to check that she’s all right.” I also recalled the many women I knew in Moscow who had divorced because their mothers did not get on with their husbands and, in choosing between the two, “Mother always comes first.”

So on that afternoon in Leningrad I looked around the homey living room in which my hostess and her very independent daughter were graciously pouring tea, at walls hung with travel souvenirs from Poland, Hungary, and India, at its mantelpiece and tables filled with photographs of what seemed to be exclusively female progenitors—mothers, grandmothers, great-aunts. There was not a male in sight. Observing these tokens of indissoluble mother-daughter ties, I thought of the gaily painted wooden *matryoshka* dolls that are a staple of Russian folk art: breaking apart at the stomach, they spill out many identical dolls, generations of parthenogenetic females fitting snugly into each other. No artifact, I mused that day in Leningrad, is more symbolic of this country’s sovereign matriarchies.

In the notebooks in which I recorded my months of Soviet research, I listed several dozen basic categories of human experience with which to organize

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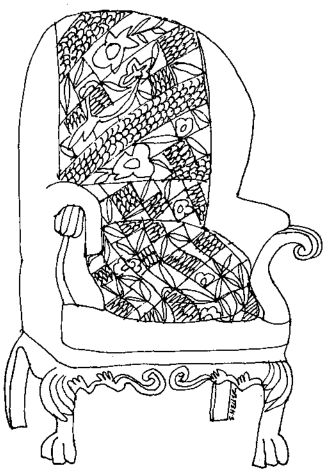
my themes: friendship, family, childhood, heroism, education, sex, marriage, religion. I realized upon finishing my list that one fundamental category was missing from it: love.

It was not an oversight. Throughout my time in the Soviet Union, I barely, if ever, heard one mention of the word *lyubov*—"love" in its romantic sense. It confirmed my suspicion that love in the Soviet Union is a luxury, an accessory, but hardly the prerequisite for marriage or happiness that it is in Western Europe or the United States.

Conversations with Soviet women made it clear to me that heterosexual love tends to recede in importance before the far deeper bonds of blood kinship, filial responsibility, and matriarchal ties, and that they tend to look on marriage as a coolly pragmatic commodity resorted to for a variety of utilitarian reasons: a chance to move to a larger, more attractive city; an improvement in housing conditions; a way of escaping the appalling lack of sexual privacy which results from living with parents; an enhancement in job opportunity and social status. In sum, some form of marriage, past or present, loving or loveless, is a cornerstone of social and professional respectability.



For in the Soviet Union it is just splendid, and utterly normal, to be a single, divorced mother. Outside the circles of the progressive intelligentsia, a considerable stigma is attached to being a spinster, and to never having experienced marriage and procreation. When Soviet women are asked why the great majority of them get married when they could be economically independent, and when marriage is so often nightmarish, most answer that it is essential to their career advancement: the Soviet system penalizes unmarried women by considering them "morally unstable"; the word *starukha*—"old maid"—seems to be a greater pejorative in the Soviet Union than in any other developed nation.

The rigid paternalism that has guided Soviet attitudes on sexual equality has no roots in the central, libertarian principle of Western feminism—women's right to self-determination. It has been shaped solely by instrumental concerns that the state can mold and alter according to its needs. And since the nineteen-sixties the Soviet government's approach to women's social roles has been far narrower and more conservative than it was in the first decades of its history. The notion that sex differences are biologically rather than socially created, and are thus immutable, and that woman's "natural" role is wifehood and child rearing—a concept that would have been looked on as subversively bourgeois by the first Bolshevik generation—has become a staple of government propaganda.

This stereotyping of sex differences is one of the many aspects of current Soviet culture that contradict original Marxist theory. In its efforts to create "the new Soviet person," and to combat Western Freudianism, early Marxist psychology fiercely attacked the notion of biologically innate traits; it singled out the social environment as the central force in the shaping of human behavior, and saw personality as created only through "the process of activity." Accordingly, women in the new Soviet state could easily acquire "masculine" characteristics of "rationality" and "self-control," and men could naturally develop those traits of "gentleness" and "nurturing" that current Soviet propaganda assigns exclusively to females (and whose cultivation by husbands would so ease wives' difficult schedules). But in the past two decades, because of demographers' panic about a dwindling work force, the Soviet regime's former egalitarianism has been replaced by a fixation on sex roles that verges on the neurotic. Parents have been advised to reprimand boys for displaying emotion ("You're crying just like a girl!") and to encourage in their daughters an obsessive concern for personal appearance and conventional domestic skills.

When a contemporary Soviet mother is asked what trait of character she most wishes her daughters to possess, for instance, nine times out of ten she will answer "*Zhenstvennost*"—"femininity." The word is made almost nauseating by its repetition. And a foreign traveller in the Soviet Union is immediately struck by the passionate interest evidenced by Soviet women under forty-five in traditional domestic rituals—cooking, sewing, embroidery—which their grandmothers never had the time (or perhaps even the license) to indulge in.

Except among a small but growing sector of university students, this new cult of femininity has led to an increasing trend toward early marriage. In Soviet hospitals, a woman of twenty-five or over giving birth to her first child is often referred to as an "aging first-time mother." And however tragic the statistics showing that over a third of Soviet marriages are ending in divorce, the government-bred anxiety to rush into wedlock is shown in a striking feature of the Soviet press which was unheard of before the *glasnost* era: "Getting Acquainted" columns ("25-year-old girl of middle height, attractive, sociable . . . would like to meet serious young man of 24-30 years of age, clean-living, kind—of Tartar or European origins" or "I would like to start a family with a man 34-40, not shorter than 1 metre 76 cent. in height"). I would wager that the ratio of women to men placing such ads is approximately four to one.

These observations, however, apply primarily to middle-class women of median age, income, status. Attitudes based on class differences differ quite as much in the Soviet Union as in any capitalist country. And among the young intellectual élite a very different picture emerges.

On a crystal-cold winter morning, Professor Elvira Novikova, the feminist historian and writer who has become a good friend, took me to visit a branch of her alma mater, the Moscow Lenin State Pedagogical Institute. Founded in 1877, it was one of the first centers of higher learning in Moscow to open its doors to women. The institute now graduates many of the young people, mostly women, who will become the next generation of high-school teachers and university professors.

The interior walls of the institute—a handsome neoclassical building with Doric colonnades—are blue and green and are still hung with 1942-vintage posters that remind all onlookers of the Great Patriotic War: mother and child clutching each other before a bloodied Nazi bayonet, with the slogan "WARRIORS OF THE RED ARMY, SAVE US!," and, the most famous war image of all, a powerful woman, her head wrapped in a peasant kerchief, pointing at the timeless slogan "THE MOTHERLAND CALLS YOU!"

For several hours, Elvira and I met with the rector of the institute, a genial woman of starkly old-fashioned style, with gray hair escaping from a bun, and flat, masculine shoes. She had asked eight students to talk to us over tea. These young women were enrolled in different "faculties" of the university, which has a student body of eleven thousand, and were scarcely acquainted with one another. Our first topic of conversation was what seems to be an obsession of college-age Soviet women: the rapidly growing divorce rate, which they link to their mothers' tendency to pressure them into early marriage.

"My mother and I are absolutely at odds on the issue," said Tatyana, a thoughtful twenty-year-old with long brown hair, whose parents are both factory workers. "All she can think of for me is marriage and kids, whereas my principal goal is to be wise and learned. So we argue a lot. The only support I get is from my grandmother, because, of course, in the nineteen-thirties women never questioned the central role of work and career."

"My grandmother, my parents, my brother, his wife, their child, and I all share a two-room apartment," said Natasha, a young woman with alert blue eyes, who is also the child of factory workers. "Seven people in two rooms. It's kind of wonderful to all dine together every night. We get a lot of discussion time together. I have the same problem as Tatyana: Mother believes that women must start a family early. My babushka's the one who says it's essential to have both a career and a family."

"My babushka's also the only one who understands why young people want to live together before marriage," Tatyana chimed in. "Morals were much freer in her time, in the twenties."

All the young women nodded in agreement.

I ♥ NEW YORK
BOOTH

"They say if you breathe in when you're supposed to blow out and blow out when you're supposed to breathe in you'll lose weight."

• •

"Our mothers' postwar generation passed on this dangerous attitude—that it's a stigma to stay unmarried, that if you wait too long you'll never get a man," said Olga, an aspiring zoologist. "It's a horrible side of our society—when a girl isn't married at nineteen or twenty-one, she says, 'I'm a left-behind, useless woman, useless to all.' "

"I'm a very unusual case," said Ira, who, at twenty-three, was the oldest of the group. A trim blonde, she was a linguist who had recently married a career Army officer. "My mother is Estonian, so my parents are perhaps more geared to the Western tradition; they simply put me out of the house when I finished high school, and I had to get a room of my own."

Ira's fellow-students all turned their heads to stare at her. A room of her own! It was clear that they'd never before set eyes on a peer who had become independent so early.

"And I'll be grateful to them to the end of my days," Ira went on proudly. "I worked for two years before entering the institute, and that gave me time to prepare for marriage. My husband and I were twenty-three and twenty-eight when we married, and I think our union is perfect."

"I was married at age eighteen and had two children in the following four years," said Masha, a smart-looking young matron with the round pink face of a *matryoshka* doll. "But I couldn't have started my studies here without my husband's help. He's twelve years older than I, a very serious man, and he helps out with everything in the house—diapers, cooking."

This, too, seemed extremely unusual. There were gasps of "Oh, you lucky thing!"

"Thirty per cent of our divorces are caused by too many people living in one crowded apartment," said Ira. "My husband and I were careful to wait two years. We married only when we were settled in a decent apartment and each of us was earning a good salary."

"*Molodets*"—"Smart girl"—the rector observed, from her desk.

"For my part, I wish to bring up a child by myself, without a man," Tatyana said. "A man! Who needs a *second* child?"

The young women laughed and clapped in approval, and the rector rocked approvingly in her chair. I asked for a show of hands on the issue. Six out of the eight young women asserted that if they hadn't found "an adequate husband" by the age of twenty-six or so they'd have a child without one.

"And I'm going to wait until I've finished my dissertation to have my first child," said provident Ira. "My field is the British contemporary novel. I'm writing my thesis on Graham Greene, and as soon as that's behind me I'll feel ready for pregnancy."

"*Tovarishch!*" Elvira exclaimed. "Tell us how you go about planning a family that carefully."

"It's very simple," Ira answered forthrightly. "The IUD."

The young women shook their heads with envy. The group compared notes on the immense difficulty of obtaining IUDs, or any effective contraceptive, outside the country's main urban centers—Leningrad, Moscow. And even there, they agreed, you had to find a particularly privileged doctor, for only one out of ten gynecologists has access to IUDs.

Throughout the discussion, at the back of the room there had sat a pretty, silent young woman with heavy eye makeup, who was wearing a gold-embroidered scarf and a large amount of gold jewelry. Her style differed strikingly from her peers', which was carefully groomed but simple, and I asked her for her view of the issues we had been discussing.

"My father is a military man and my mother hasn't worked for twenty years," she said with a touch of self-consciousness. "She has brought us up and happily busied herself with her sewing and knitting, and I want to be just like her and have a husband and three children."

Heads turned toward this anomaly with looks of annoyance and dismissal. The young woman pouted and appeared sorry to have spoken at all.

"Look at her, decked out like a strumpet and selling herself like a slave in the marriage market," Elvira whispered to me.

"To think that our government spends its precious money educating her, and all she wants to do is stay home with the kids and do needlework," the rector grumbled to Elvira.

I then asked the young women to describe what they saw as their ideal life fifteen years from now.

"My first priority is to love my work—to become an outstanding specialist in the field of teaching English," Tatyana announced. "Once that's established, I can support a child."

"I also want a beloved work, above all else," Nadia agreed. "I wish to go to work every day as if it were a festival."

"In fifteen years, I want to have finished my *doctoral* dissertation in contemporary British fiction," the energetic Ira announced. "I want to continue with my community work and Komsomol activities. I want my husband, who's now a major, to have become a colonel. I also want him to have finished his advanced degree in political science. And we've agreed that we want two children, so we'll need a slightly larger apartment."

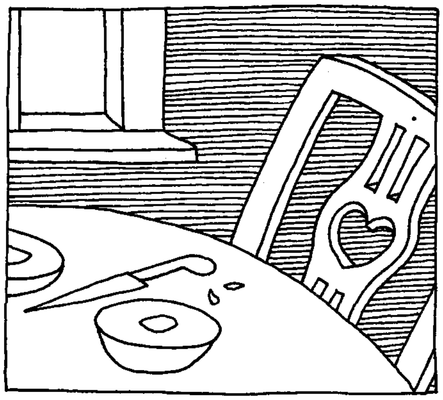
"I want a beloved work above all," said Natasha, the girl who lived with six members of her family in a two-room apartment. "I perhaps want a husband and children, but, even more important, I want to remain very close to my parents, and continue living with them."

"Bravo!" the rector applauded.

"What if your husband doesn't like it that way?" I asked.

"The marriage will end," Natasha announced.

After the young women had left—we had talked for almost three hours—Elvira and I stayed on and chatted with the rector.



The two educators continued to deplore the societal pressures that forced women into early marriage. And then the rector—who has been married for thirty-five years to a man she describes as "a marvellous person, charmingly infantile"—made a statement that might well sum up Soviet women's attitudes toward life.

"I'll tell you," she said. "I have only a son. But if I had a daughter I'd suggest she go and have a child without a man. Because the most important duty of a woman, along with her work, is to have children, far beyond the duty of being a wife."

"And the *next* most important thing is to keep a sense of duty toward your parents," Elvira said.

"Bravo!" said the rector of the institute.

The following day, I got together with Tatyana, the serious young woman with aspirations to teach English and to bring up a child by herself. We talked for several hours over dinner.

She was formidable. She had just read eight novels of Iris Murdoch's in a row. As a teen-ager, she had read Bulgakov's "Master and Margarita" half a dozen times, shortly after the government allowed publication of the long-suppressed novel. She knew her Stalinist history to perfection. "Among other things, he surrounded himself—excuse me—with ass-kissers," she commented, obviously relishing her command of American slang.

Most of the young men of her generation whom she'd met were "immature and terribly lacking in respect for women," she said. Apart from books, her favorite distraction was ballroom dancing—waltz, tango—but her male friends disdained such music and liked only heavy-metal rock, which she detested. So she went to ballroom-dancing clubs with groups of women friends, and they danced together, "as our grandmothers did in wartime."

I asked Tatyana how she proposed to support her child.

"I'll wait until a few years after I've finished my dissertation, because after that I'll be receiving three hundred and fifty or four hundred rubles a month, and I can save up from my salary," she said. "So after the child is born I'll stay home with him or her for two or three years, giving English lessons and making homemade sweaters—a child needs to be with its mother for at least that length of time. I can get forty-five rubles for a good homemade sweater, and my babushka taught me to knit so well I can easily turn out three or four sweaters a month."

Her three closest women friends, Tatyana said, all planned to raise a child in approximately the same circumstances. And when one of them went out to attend classes or to shop, the others would take turns minding her babies.

I asked Tatyana what role, in her view and that of her friends, a child played in a woman's life.

"A child is . . ." She thought a little. "A child is a woman's best friend."

Mother and a cherished vocation as the first loves of a woman's life, the child as the indispensable friend—that seemed to be the prevailing view among these future educators of the nation's youth.

VIII

PORTRAIT: I often enjoy Sunday dinner at the Moscow home of Irina Velembovskaya, a writer and former industrial worker in her mid-sixties. Her father suffered two decades of exile in Siberia under Stalin's purges, and she herself spent many years working in mattress factories in the Urals.

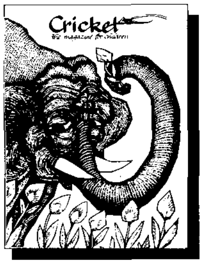
Irina is a hefty, genial woman who has traits that I treasured in my great-grandmother and my great-aunt, the Russian women I most loved during my childhood: prodigal generosity, angelic selflessness, a sly wit, a boundless gift for nurturing and domesticity. Notwithstanding a considerable literary reputation and outspokenly progressive political views, Irina still leads the frugal, insular life characteristic of the Soviet working class: she has never been outside the Soviet Union; I am the third American she has ever talked to; when I take her to dinner at one of Moscow's new coöperative cafés, she informs me that it is only the third time in her life that she has been in a restaurant.

Irina was separated from her husband before their only child was born. She now shares a five-room Moscow apartment with her daughter, Kseniya, a pretty redhead of forty who works as a magazine editor; a very bright teenage granddaughter, Yuliya; and an outgoing son-in-law, Sasha Vassin, who is a computer programmer and has founded a coöperative that will offer foreigners bed-and-breakfast accommodations with Moscow families. The décor of their apartment—dark, intimate, snugly curtained and upholstered, and filled with wondrously kitschy pictures of maidens in deep prayer, of dancing, sleeping, or stalking bears, of nineteenth-century couples walking dreamily through green woods—reminds me as few interiors do of my own Russian childhood in Paris.

Unlike Americans, Russians are notably reticent about their private lives and emotional problems but announce their salaries almost upon acquaintance—by way of introduction, it sometimes seems. So at first meeting I learned that each adult in the Velembovskaya-Vassin clan earns beween two hundred and fifty and four hundred and fifty rubles a month—a good cut above the average national wage of two hundred rubles, or three hundred and twenty dollars. They are able to share their spacious apartment in the heart of Moscow for a rental of only forty-five rubles a month. Kseniya points out that it is a surreally small sum compared with the price of a pair of poorly made Russian shoes (sixty rubles) or decent, foreign-made black-market shoes (a hundred and fifty rubles).

Irina and Kseniya are both superb cooks, and they excel in the most traditional Russian dishes—pelmeni, kulebyaka, okroshka. Throughout the produce-starved winter, their table, like that of the luckier Moscow families, is enriched with edibles—tomatoes, apricots, mushrooms, beans—dried or otherwise preserved during the summer, thanks to a tiny, one-room dacha they have a few miles outside the capital.

During one dinner, some tension had arisen between Kseniya and her husband—a rare event in this unusually harmonious family—and Kseniya had launched into one of those diatribes against marriage which have become fashionable among the Russian intelligentsia. "How I envy those girls who are *choosing* to have a child all on their own, without getting married," she said. "They just can't *find* a handsome, gentlemanly man who earns decent money. And women are



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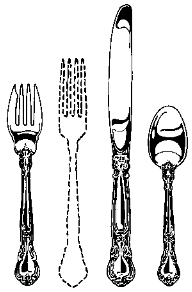

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so much better educated! They finish at the university, read Tsvetaeva and Akhmatova, go to theatre and gallery exhibits, while the men of their milieu have barely finished high school and come home from the factory to collapse on the divan and watch television."

"A vast exaggeration, as usual," Sasha retorted.

"Don't interrupt," Kseniya snapped. "Any young woman in her right mind is better off living alone with her child than sitting at home with a man who constrains her by never wanting to go out anywhere, and doesn't lift a finger at home, and creates scandals with his drinking. Why should any woman be stuck with *two* children?"

Such outbursts against marriage had become only too familiar to me, and I changed the subject.

"Irina," I said, turning to Kseniya's mother, "who were the major role models for your generation when you were growing up, in the nineteen-thirties?"

"Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov—all the ghastly guys who were in power then," she replied. "I hate to admit that those were our heroes. We were all modelling ourselves on men in those days. I can't think of one woman in the public eye we admired. And when we were Pioneers the ideal imposed on us by Stalin was Pavlik Morozov, a little idiot criminal who squealed on his father and had him arrested on some trumped-up charges in return for a cash award from the secret police. In every town, there were parks, schools, swimming pools, skating rinks named after Morozov. To think that up to two years ago they were still trying to cram that Morozov garbage down my granddaughter's throat."

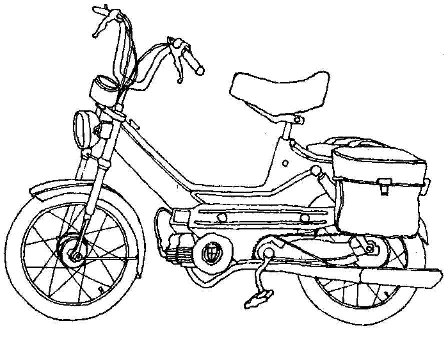
I asked Kseniya who her generation's role models had been.

"We may have been the first to take on women role models," she answered thoughtfully. "But what kind of women? Very masculine ones. In the late fifties, we admired women truck drivers, tractor drivers, astronauts. Many friends of mine wanted to go out to Siberia and be biologists, heroic scientists. That was still the great romantic ideal then—to do man's work, really masculine work. How things have changed! We were so enthusiastic about joining Party youth groups in those days. Now there are a lot of hooligans in my daughter's Pioneer group. Many kids look on the Pioneers and Komsomol as a bore, and among my friends the Party can't find a soul to recruit. My generation has dumped the patriotism and the Siberian ideals. We just want to have more time at home to rest up from work."

IX

PORTRAIT: Svetlana Alekseevna Vereshchagina is the cultural editor of the largest newspaper in Western Siberia, *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda*, which reaches a million readers. At forty-two, she is raising a three-year-old granddaughter. Svetlana's daughter, who was married at nineteen, attends a university in Moscow with her husband; the young couple must live in one tiny room in a student dormitory, so Svetlana insisted on bringing her granddaughter to Irkutsk, to give the child a healthier life and allow the young parents to pursue their studies in peace. The mother and father miss their child very much. Svetlana makes cassettes of her granddaughter's voice, and her parents listen to them when they phone in the evenings.

"I get up before seven and dress my little granddaughter Nastasya for nursery school," Svetlana told me when I asked her about an average day's schedule. "I wash her and do her braids and walk her to the day-care center. We chat on the way over—she's such a miracle, so very sweet! I return and make coffee for myself and put on my makeup and go to work. In the evening, Nastasya has to be picked up by seven, and frequently I'm still at work. So I'm saved by my mother. When we have our weekly editorial meeting, for instance, Mother will pick her up and feed her and put her to bed. When I do finish work by seven, I pick Nastasya up at school and warm up dinner, which I've usually made the night before. Around nine, after we've watched a bit of television, I put her to bed and iron her clothes for the next day—I leave the door open to her bedroom, so she can *see* me ironing. That way, she falls asleep more peacefully. When she falls asleep, I take a little time off for myself, read a pile of magazines and journals."



Without any prompting from me, Svetlana added, with a forthright smile, "Ah, you're probably wondering about what happens to my private life. I can entertain guests after Nastasya is asleep. I've reinforced the dividing wall so that if I close her door she doesn't hear a thing. I have a few woman friends who often come over, and sometimes I entertain a man with whom I'm on very warm terms."

Svetlana, who belongs to the generation that came of age after the Second World War, still looks on marriage as "an important asset." Although she has been twice divorced, she sometimes wishes she had a husband to help her bring up little Nastasya. And she has had many new offers of marriage. But those possibilities seem to have diminished before the more powerful ties of kinship and tribal loyalty.

"I turned down a Moscow man, as perfect a gentleman as one could find," she told me. "This is hard to believe. I turned him down even though *he has his own apartment and car!* I couldn't do it, because my aging parents are here in Siberia, and the graves of my ancestors, all my kin are in the cemetery, my roots are here. Without this rough land, these mountains, I can't imagine my life. So I would be incapable of moving to Moscow, even for a great job, even to get married and live in a splendid apartment of my own."

Sitting in her office at the newspaper, with photographs of Decembrist heroes on the wall behind her, this cultivated woman looked torn, confused about the drawbacks and advantages of remaining single. "I still have time to start a new family," she continued, with a candor that I found peculiar to Siberian women. "I have time yet to offer love and passion and temperament. I can give it all to someone who will value it. My husband would not be displeased with me," she added coquettishly. "I have a wide range of interests, I'm a fine conversationalist—all this is also very important to a man."

Then the irrepressible domesticity of Soviet women came to the fore. "I'll tell you," Svetlana said, in a confidential tone. "There's still no better way to reach a man than through his stomach. That's the way most fine conversation, spiritual contact will occur! To please a man, go to the market as soon as the first cherries, the first tomatoes are out, put out your best tablecloth and napkins, set a charming table laden with all the beautiful first produce. Your man will be so pleased!"

Over dinner that night at my hotel, I asked Svetlana whether it had been a hard decision to make: to bring up her grandchild single-handedly.

"I never had a moment's hesitation," she answered. "I simply told my mother when Nastasya was a year old, 'I'm flying to Moscow and picking her up to bring her back here.' "

Most American women in their early forties, I said, would not find such a decision so easy. They would probably look on such a step as a considerable responsibility and sacrifice.

"They would consider it a sacrifice?" Svetlana asked me, bewildered.

"Yes," I repeated. "A sacrifice."

Svetlana looked shocked.

"How can you say it might be a hard decision for anyone? It was not even a decision but an immediate and unquestioned impulse! I must give my daughter what my mother gave to me. When I was a student, my mother enabled me to get an education by bringing up my daughter, and later she stayed with her whenever I went on a business trip. How can you Americans even speak of such a thing as sacrifice? To us, such behavior is nothing more than the normal and absolute return of love, the sacred call of the heart."

—FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY

•

NOW WHERE?

It wakes when I wake, walks
when I walk, turns back when I
turn back, beating me to the door.

It spoils my food and steals
my sleep, and mocks me, saying,
"Where is your God now?"

And so, like a widow, I lie down
after supper. If I lie down
or sit up it's all the same:

the days and nights bear me along.
To strangers I must seem
alive. Spring comes, summer;

cool, clear weather; heat, rain. . . .

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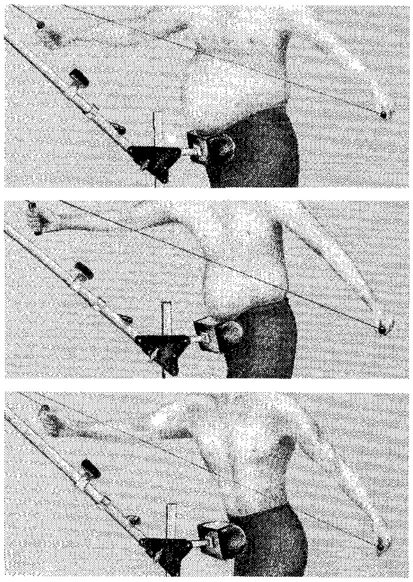

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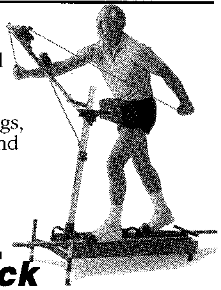

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ANNALS OF SURGERY

TRANSPLANTING A HEART

ONE of the many works of the fifteenth-century painter Fra Angelico has aroused the interest and admiration of a small society whose members are not usually thought of as aficionados of Renaissance art. That is the exclusive, high-tech fraternity of researchers in human-organ transplantation, and its members have become fascinated by Fra Angelico's "Saints Cosmas and Damian Transplanting a Leg," in the Museum of the Church of San Marco, in Florence. The subjects of the painting are two brothers, pious Christian physicians who ministered to the poor in the southeastern corner of Asia Minor during the third century. Because they did not accept payment for their services, they were among those called by the Greeks *hoi anargyroi*—the silverless ones. Arrested and tortured by the Romans in 303, during the Emperor Diocletian's religious persecutions, Cosmas and Damian refused to renounce their faith, and were beheaded. In time, they became the patron saints of surgeons and physicians. After their martyrdom, numerous legendary deeds were attributed to the two saints, the most persistent of which, perhaps because it epitomizes their healing ministry, is the one memorialized by Fra Angelico. In the painting he depicts the brothers in the act of grafting the healthy leg of an Ethiopian donor onto the body of a bell-tower custodian who had undergone amputation for either cancer or gangrene. So popular was the theme of this miracle that there are at least three other well-known representations of it in European museums, all made within two hundred years of the Fra Angelico painting.

The myths of transplantation appeal to that part of the human mind which clings to the hope that life can be made eternal. If only it were possible to replace worn-out or sick body parts with healthy new ones, there would be no need to die; at the very least, waning vigor might be restored. As early as the seventh century B.C., Hindu surgeons were reconstructing injured noses using the patients' own skin. In late-eighteenth-century London, the Scottish surgeon John Hunter managed to transplant a human tooth into the comb of a cock. He also grafted testicles from one chicken onto another. But these were isolated successes, and, though tantalizing in their implications, they led nowhere. Until recently, the attempt to transplant organs from one human being into another has been among the most chimerical of the quests of science.

Things have changed, however: we are now living in an age of scientific miracles. Every day, in medical centers throughout the world, people of all ages leave operating rooms carrying within them hearts or lungs or kidneys or pancreases that began life in the bodies of others. In July of last year, for example, a man I'll call Anthony Cretella underwent a heart transplant. There was nothing about his operation, his postoperative course, or his recovery that his cardiologists and surgeons did not consider routine. And that may be the greatest miracle of all—that an operation so complex and technologically demanding, an operation that as recently as the middle of this century seemed too far-off to hope for, has gone so rapidly from being a fantasy to being standard surgical practice.

I am a general surgeon. During my years of training, which ended in the early nineteen-sixties, I learned to perform all the cardiac operations that could then be done (even at that time the list was not short), and although it gradually became clear to me that I had neither the personality nor the temperament of a cardiac surgeon, I have never lost a certain awe at the intricacies of the heart and at the skill of the doctors who treat it. And, like almost everyone else, I have been astonished at what has been accomplished in the field of transplant science in such a very short time. One day, I decided to see for myself. Although I had observed segments of the transplant process, I had never followed an individual patient through the entire course of his operation and recovery. I asked Yale-New Haven Hospital's transplant-research fellow, Dr. George Letsou, to call me when his team was readying itself to perform its next cardiac transplant.

THE muscular wall of the heart is nourished not by the blood within its chambers but by a group of vessels that are embedded in its surface and encircle the top of the heart like a crown, and are therefore called coronary arteries. Major branches of the coronary arteries descend toward the heart's tip, diverging into smaller vessels along the way, to irrigate the muscle with bright-red, nourishing blood from the body's largest artery, the aorta. When the coronaries become narrowed by spasm or by thickened plaques (a condition called arteriosclerosis), or both, the heart responds the way an overworked calf muscle does when it cramps. The resulting pain is called angina pectoris—from the Latin verb *angere*, meaning "to choke or throttle," and the noun

"You've got him. Edward the Accessible at your service."

pectus, meaning "chest"—and, as anyone who has experienced angina pectoris can testify, never has a symptom been given a more descriptive name. What the sufferer feels is a severe squeezing or crushing in the front of his chest, as though a fist or a constricting band were trying to extinguish his life. The sensation often radiates up into the neck and down one or both arms—most commonly the left.

Fortunately, the agony of most angina pectoris lasts only a short time, frequently less than a minute. Patients quickly learn to adapt to this fact, and develop various kinds of coping mechanisms. Because angina commonly occurs at inconvenient times or places, patients also learn how to hide it, in order to avoid calling attention to themselves. One of my older teachers in medical school told me of a practice called *Schaufenster schauen* in his native Germany. The phrase is best translated as "window-shopping," and refers to the way a patient attacked by angina during an afternoon stroll might stop and look with feigned nonchalance at the display in a shopwindow until the discomfort passed.

Early accounts of angina, dating from centuries before its cause was known, describe patients who are ghostly pale and terrified by a sense of immediately impending death but become quite calm and normal in appearance as soon as the episode passes. It was long ago recognized, however, that once the attacks begin, only rarely does a patient become free of them. The great English physician William Heberden wrote in 1768, "The termination of the angina pectoris is remarkable. For, if no accidents intervene, but the disease go on to its height, the patients all suddenly fall down, and perish almost immediately."

They perish because they sustain a major myocardial infarction, or heart attack. A section of the myocardium, or cardiac muscle, which is supplied by a narrowed branch of one of the main coronary arteries, is deprived of blood long enough so that it cannot recover, and it infarcts; that is, it dies of blood deprivation. If the infarction is large enough, it garbles the heart's intrinsic rhythm and converts it into a mass of uncoördinated wriggles and squirms, called fibrillation. Death follows within minutes.

One of the most detailed premodern descriptions of angina pectoris was left by John Hunter, who succumbed to the disease himself, in 1793. Hunter was a red-headed fireplug of a man, renowned for the fury of his contentious nature. He never learned to avoid confrontations, even though his blood-starved myocardium cried out its anginal warning each time he allowed his anger to get the better of him. He would often position himself in front of a mirror during an attack, so that he could record his appearance as well as his symptoms. Hunter virtually dared his coronary arteries to stake their final claim. He was fond of saying, "My life is in the hands of any rascal who chooses to annoy and tease me." It was in the boardroom of St. George's Hospital in London during a heated staff meeting that Hunter's rendezvous with massive infarction occurred. He rushed out of the room in a torrent of anger and chest pain. Moments later, he collapsed lifeless into the arms of a colleague standing in the corridor.

pesto
M. Shou

The first infarction of most patients is relatively slight. The heart muscle recovers, and the injured area heals into a scar. As episodes reoccur, more and more muscle is replaced by scar, and eventually the heart becomes too weak to pump with sufficient strength. This is what physicians call heart failure. When that occurs, blood backs up into the lungs, liver, and other organs, because the force of the heartbeat is insufficient to keep it circulating properly.

Anthony Cretella's heart hadn't yet become weak enough to fail, but he had the most crippling case of angina pectoris that some of his physicians had ever seen. The pain had reached the point where it was unpredictable. Cardiologists call such a condition unstable angina, because the attacks occur without the stimulus of physical or emotional stress. Even at complete rest, in the coronary-intensive-care unit of Yale-New Haven Hospital, Cretella was having frequent episodes, requiring narcotics and also large doses of nitroglycerin intravenously and by mouth to help his coronary arteries to resist spasm. In desperation, his doctors had consulted members of the anesthesia department's pain service, but even they had nothing to offer.

What led up to all this was thirteen years of known heart disease and probably many more, during which plaques had been building up. Anthony Cretella, who is now fifty-one, had his first myocardial infarction in 1978, following at least two years of angina. Shortly after the attack, his home-town physicians, in Mystic, Connecticut, sent him to New Haven to consult Dr. Lawrence Cohen, a professor of cardiology at the Yale University School of Medicine. At that time, Cretella's cholesterol reading was 260, well above the upper limit of normal, which is approximately 200. He was a smoker, and he had done nothing about twenty or twenty-five extra pounds he carried on his stocky five-foot-eight frame. Considering that Cretella was only thirty-nine, his physicians were apprehensive about his future. They were also concerned about an additional problem, and they wanted to be sure that Dr. Cohen was made aware of it: in their referral letter they described Cretella as "a restless Type A emotional person who can never sit still."

Cohen's evaluation was more encouraging than he himself had expected it to be. His studies of Cretella's heart showed that the arteriosclerosis was thus far limited to the right coronary artery; the left was still completely normal. The involved portion of the muscle was not large, and the angina had disappeared once the process of scarring was completed. Cohen felt that weight reduction and giving up cigarettes might prevent the plaque formation from progressing. In addition, he counselled Cretella about the necessity of relaxing his behavior pattern.

That might have been adequate advice for most patients, but it didn't change a thing for Anthony Cretella: he preferred to believe that the prime cause of his heart disease was a factor for which he bore no personal responsibility—his family history. He later told me his theory, in the blunt-spoken manner that characterizes not only his talk but his entire approach to the world. He spoke in short, economical sentences. His voice had no inflec-

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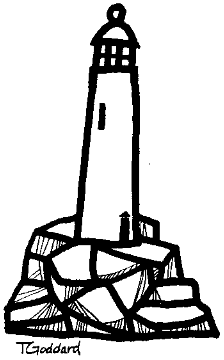
tions—it never rose and it never fell. Like his face, it betrayed no expression, as though he were afraid that even such a small effort would consume his remaining store of energy. Cretella's skin had the pallor of chronic illness, and of exhaustion. The contrast with his hair, which is black, and his thick brush of a mustache gave his skin a gleaming whiteness, making his expressionless face look like an alabaster mask.

"I was born with it," he told me. "They never could do anything—it's my family history. When I was in my early thirties, I felt like I was already getting old. But nobody would listen to me. I had lots of jobs—I worked on a truck and I worked all different things—and I always felt good. And then I got a desk job, and that's when I started feeling like I'm getting old. That's when the arteriosclerosis started taking over. I believe that it was in my system all those years. As soon as I sat down, that blood thickened up. Maybe six, seven years before the heart attack, I argued that something was wrong with me. You see, I should have known, because my mother was sick with her heart and her arteries back then. And I did pursue it, but they didn't find anything. It was like that all the time. Of course, I refuse pain. I just ignore it. I do have a hiatus hernia. I used to get pain all the time, and they thought it was my hiatus hernia."

Most of what he said is verified by the record. Cretella had been given a cardiac-stress test when he complained of chest pain two years before his first coronary, and the results were negative. His pain was not typical of hiatus hernia, which tends to be more burning in nature, but to his doctors the stress test seemed convincing.



"I used to pass out—break out in a cold sweat and pass out," he went on. "My wife used to go nuts. Four, five, six years."

I agreed that even then it had probably been his heart, and said that in retrospect his pain appeared to be little bits of angina.

"*Big* bits," he said. "Finally, I had the heart attack. I wanted to say, 'You're a bunch of assholes, all of you!' "

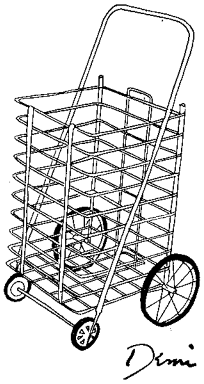
The result of Cretella's recalcitrance and his refusal to change his eating and smoking habits was another heart attack, four years later. In March of 1982, Cretella returned to New Haven to have his first cardiac operation, a coronary-artery bypass graft, or CABG—universally called a cabbage. In this procedure, short segments are excised from a leg vein and attached to the aorta and to points beyond the obstructed areas in each of the narrowed coronary arteries. It's tantamount to rerouting traffic around a highway pileup. All three of Cretella's main coronary arteries required grafting.

The results of the CABG were good, and Cretella remained lax about changing his habits. He seems to have thought that he had his problem licked. His only post-CABG concession was to cut his smoking from a pack a day to half a pack. He had been through a series of unsatisfactory jobs and an unhappy marriage, which ended in divorce in 1969. Even though he was pleased with his current job, and even though he had had a strong second marriage since 1975, he wasn't able to achieve a satisfactory level of equanimity. He was tense, easily upset, and not inclined to optimism. Nevertheless, the CABG lasted seven years, during which time Cretella was without symptoms, and led a life that in all its essentials was quite normal. And then, late in April of 1989, his angina pectoris recurred. His local cardiologist admitted him to New London's Lawrence & Memorial Hospital on May 5th, for a diagnostic workup. On that day, Cretella smoked his last cigarette.

The outcome of the studies was sobering. Two of the bypass grafts were completely occluded, and the third was only five per cent open. The few of his smaller peripheral coronary vessels that were still open were described by the cardiologist as "diminutive." No vessel was wide enough beyond an obstruction to attempt another CABG. On May 10th, Cretella was transferred to Yale-New Haven Hospital.

His angina was rapidly growing worse. Since there was no possibility of an operation that might restore blood flow to the cardiac muscle, there remained only one hope. Dr. Cohen told Cretella that without the transplant of a normal heart, with its healthy coronary arteries, he had less than a twenty-per-cent chance of surviving as long as a year. Reluctant and terrified, Cretella agreed to be screened for placement on the list of patients awaiting a donor organ.

Cohen had thought hard before offering Cretella a transplant. Donor organs are in short supply, and a transplanted heart often undergoes a process cardiologists call accelerated arteriosclerosis, which is one of the major causes of failure over the long term. The coronary arteries of the grafted organ are much more susceptible to plaque formation than are those of a normal person's heart. Transplant patients who continue to smoke and to maintain elevated cholesterol levels are at high risk of a swift recurrence of coronary occlusion, and Cohen's choice of patients for transplantation depends largely on his assessment of their willingness to comply with the rules. Cohen weighed the conflicting factors. "There were two quite different threads that ran through my thoughts about Cretella," he told me. "The first was that he seemed hellbent on destroying himself. He was perhaps best characterized as a wise guy, who had a very hard exterior, trying to be blasé. What really got to me and frustrated me in my contacts with him was the idea that here's a guy of forty-nine or fifty years of age who has been through triple-bypass surgery, has a bad family history—and he's still smoking. He was also taking his cardiac medication very irregularly. The other thread was the absolute devotion to him that was demonstrated by his wife. She was one of the most genuinely concerned individuals I have ever seen. I subsequently saw much of her, and I could tell that there was nothing fake about this."



Clearly, another factor in the equation was the character of Dr. Cohen. Unlike many high-ranking university physicians with a heavy load of academic duties, Cohen has a large consulting practice. The reason for his popularity as a consultant has as much to do with his personality as with his clinical skills. There is a gentle kindness in him, which pervades his relationships not only with patients but with colleagues and with the young doctors whom he trains. His voice is soft; he speaks very slowly and deliberately, in the manner of someone who is accustomed to being asked his opinion, but he is not a ponderous man. He has a sagacious sense of humor, and gray-blue eyes that seem full of sympathetic understanding. Although he represents the peak of superspecialization, Cohen is an old-fashioned doctor. What interests him most is people, and people know it immediately. In spite of Cretella's irresponsible past, Cohen did not wish to deny him a new heart, and he certainly could not deny him the kind of emotional support needed to carry him through an operation and its aftermath.

Cohen had already established that Cretella fulfilled the basic criteria for acceptance into the transplant program: he was less than fifty-five years of age; he had end-stage heart disease, with a life expectancy of less than twelve months; he had no other significant diseases and no infection; and his lungs were healthy. Cretella now underwent a psychosocial evaluation, to make sure that everyone, not only Cohen, could be convinced that Cretella and his family (he has a son and two daughters) were equipped to handle the new challenges that would be presented by the transplant. His attitudes toward his illness, his ability to comply with highly specific living patterns, the strength of his family support system, and his potential for a personally satisfying future—all these were assessed by a team of social workers, nurses, and physicians. It was also necessary to evaluate Cretella's medical insurance, whereupon, to everyone's immense relief, it was discovered that his company had provided a policy that covered every cent of the cost. When such coverage is not available, social workers and others have to scramble to find different sources of payment. No hospital can absorb the price of a heart transplant, which averages a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, and very few patients can afford the permanent out-of-pocket cost of at least five thousand dollars a year for drugs.

Discussions were held with Cretella and his wife, Susan, concerning the transplantation and its consequences, to make sure that they understood the

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entire sequence of events, including possible problems and complications. Faced with the virtual certainty of death, Anthony Cretella made a commitment to change his ways. He later was his usual direct self when he described to me his feelings on May 18th, the day he was told that he had qualified for the final candidate list: "I was scared shitless; I felt like I wasn't in a real world. But I decided to do it. It wasn't that I wanted a new heart, it's just that I was hoping to live. I'd do anything to live. I guess some people would say, you know, 'I'm so sick I want to die,' but some people say, 'I want to live—do anything you can for me.' So that's what I said."

ONE of the secrets of the human heart is that its faultless rhythm is independent of the outside influence of nerves. Its regularity and the very fact that it beats at all are the result of a self-generated stimulus, which is triggered anew for each pulsation. Although nerve impulses may change the heart's rate of beating, it is the conduction of electricity from the heart's own internal generator, called the sinoatrial node, that maintains the forceful regularity that is the heart's chief source of wonder. Once the utility of this fact was recognized by surgical researchers, a supposed major obstacle to the transplantation of a heart from one person to another was shown to be nonexistent: after a heart is stitched in place, it is capable of starting a spontaneous beat on its own. But before cardiac transplantation could become a reality two serious problems had to be solved, one of which has not reached a completely satisfactory solution even today. The first difficulty was strictly technical—how to graft a donor's heart simply and safely into the chest of the recipient. Research teams working in various countries eventually developed the necessary methods, however, and the actual surgical process by which one person's heart is connected up to the major blood vessels of another has remained virtually unchanged since Dr. Norman Shumway and Dr. Richard Lower first described it, in 1960. The technical maneuvers involved in cardiac transplantation, although complex, are now far from being the most challenging in the repertoire of modern surgery.

The more difficult challenge was, and is, convincing the recipient's body that it must not destroy the new heart as an unwelcome invader. As early as the sixteenth century, the Bolognese surgeon Gaspare Tagliacozzi described a phenomenon he called "the force and power of individuality." Tagliacozzi lived at a time when amputation of the nose was performed as punishment for a variety of crimes, and in trying to reconstruct the faces of the victims of such punishment he discovered that while skin taken from the patient himself would heal properly into place, skin taken from someone else would not. He theorized that each individual was endowed with some mystical way of knowing which tissue was foreign and of killing it. The source of the uniqueness of each person's flesh remained a mystery for almost three hundred years—until the basic principles of the body's immune system were discovered, early in this century. Some of the most sophisticated biomedical-research efforts of our time have gone into explaining immunity, and yet their results can be distilled into a principle so simple that Tagliacozzi, had he known of the existence of cells, could have predicted it: the cells and the body fluids of the host recognize specific elements within the grafted tissue as originating in some other individual; they then create specialized killer substances whose function it is to destroy that particular tissue. In the long history of mankind, this variety of xenophobia has been a good thing, because it has enabled us to fight off infection and rid ourselves of toxic foreign proteins that might wreak havoc with our bodies. On the other hand, it can create problems of its own, among them allergies and immune responses, like transfusion reaction and some drug or food hypersensitivities, that can cause death.

Modern technology brings modern predicaments. Blood transfusion, the most common type of tissue grafting, became safe only when scientists recognized that each of us belongs to one of four major groups of immunity producers. Although no matchup is perfect, if recipients can be paired with donors within their own groups the immune response is not strong enough to cause trouble. Blood is a tissue, but a heart or a liver or a kidney is an organ, and because an organ is composed of tissues of several types the problems of proper matchup and compatibility become more complicated; in fact, an immune system's rejection of a donated organ is certain unless the donor is the recipient's identical twin. The greatest challenge to modern transplant surgery has been to mute the recipient's immune response sufficiently so that the donor's organ will not be destroyed. One way of doing this is to decrease the host's ability to respond to the foreignness of transplanted tissue; another is to make the donated tissue less foreign, by inhibiting those factors within it (its so-called transplantation antigens) which make it so menacing. Thus far, biomedical scientists have not succeeded with this second approach, and have concentrated their efforts on methods that decrease the force of the host's immune response. The difficulty is that inhibiting the host's immunity to foreign protein also inhibits his resistance to infection. The transplant surgeon works in a narrow, poorly marked area between the two. If he does not sufficiently suppress his patient's immune system, the organ he has transplanted will be rejected; if he is too zealous in his suppression, he will be faced with overwhelming infection. There may be general guidelines, but there are no infallible rules in this game: every patient is different.

In 1970, after many years of searching and of experimenting with less than satisfactory drugs, a researcher vacationing from his job with the Swiss pharmaceutical house Sandoz Ltd. quite literally dug up an agent called cyclosporine. On a camping trip in Norway, the researcher, aware that ordinary soil has proved an antibiotic treasure trove, was on the lookout for substances that might prove useful in the hunt for new drugs. A sample of Norwegian earth which he brought back to his laboratory contained a new compound that several of his colleagues found interesting enough to experiment with. The compound was studied intermittently for four years, until it was discovered that it had the ability to suppress the immune system. Between 1974 and 1980, intensive investigations of the compound were made. In 1980, Dr. Shumway, of Stanford, and Dr. Thomas Starzl, of the University of Colorado, the world's leading transplanters of the heart and the liver, respectively, were granted sufficient cyclosporine for experimental use. Their studies resulted in Food and Drug Administration approval of the drug in 1983. Along with steroids, in the form of intravenous Solu-Medrol, or oral prednisone, cyclosporine has become the mainstay of immunosuppression. Two other agents also play a role. One of them, an older drug called Imuran, is less effective and produces more side effects; the other, a protein substance called anti-lymphocyte globulin, which is given in a brief postoperative course, acts directly against the host's circulating killer cells without injuring other tissues. Since 1983, progress in transplantation has been rapid, and, with cyclosporine so effective in suppressing the host's immunity, the main criterion for heart transplantation has become size. As Yale-New Haven Hospital's Dr. George Letsou puts it, "basically, anybody's heart goes to anybody it will fit."

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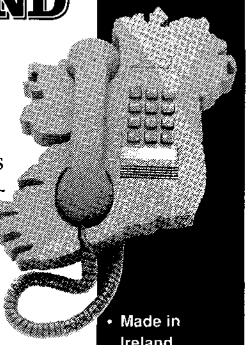
I FEEL SO INADEQUATE, RUDY. I MERELY BOUGHT YOU A ROLEX.
LEO CULLUM

A SUCCESSFUL transplant is a triumph of organization. Although the chief surgeon is the director of the enterprise, the actual putting together of all the elements is done by a person called the transplant coördinator. Yale's team is fortunate in having Gail Eddy for the job. Eddy, who was in her eleventh year as an intensive-care-unit nurse when she was tapped for the transplant team, always carries a beeper in her purse; except for vacations and professional travels, she has been on call seven days a week since taking on her duties, two years ago. If she is asked what she does for the program, she says, simply, "Everything but the surgery." She sets up the process of patient screening and organizes the workup; she integrates the family into the over-all planning; she is in constant touch with the New England Organ Bank, in Boston, about her recipient list; she supervises the activities of the doctors and nurses in the outpatient clinic for pre- and postoperative management; she correlates data about organs, medications, and fluid requirements for each candidate; she is the first person notified by the organ bank when a heart becomes available; she makes sure that all necessary equipment accompanies the transport team obtaining the donor heart and she monitors everything along the way; she is the one who tells the anxious waiting family the good news of a successful transplant; and she is the one who helps them through their grief if the transplant fails. Eddy is not sure that she believes in the condition that has been given the name "burnout" and is said to affect so many people in her profession. After thirteen years of ceaseless responsibility, she has never felt its agonies, and she thinks the reason is that the rewards more than compensate for the frazzle. I asked her once what it felt like to carry such constant burdens, and she said, "Well, it sure is life at the max, isn't it?"

While Gail Eddy was evaluating Cretella, his symptoms inexplicably decreased somewhat, with the result that he was moved down a few spaces on the list of urgent candidates in the organ bank's computer. On May 24th, he was allowed to go home to wait. But the sabbatical was brief. On June 11th, Cretella had a particularly prolonged episode of angina, and was admitted to Lawrence & Memorial Hospital with a new, though small, infarction. After three days of stability, he was transferred by ambulance to Yale-New Haven, fifty miles away, and there he was taken directly to the coronary-intensive-care unit and put on an intravenous drip of nitroglycerin.

While Cretella was at Lawrence & Memorial, he had begun to have some second thoughts about the transplant. He was relieved when his parish priest came to visit and told him that by accepting another heart he would not be violating church doctrine. "It made me feel a little better about it," he told me later. "I'm not a religious person, but I do believe. When transplants first flowered, I was one of these people that didn't believe in them. I mean, fixing things is fine. Replacing things—well, I didn't think it was right. I don't know why. And when I thought about the transplant, I had a problem with it. I think if it was ten years ago and they asked me, I would have said no. This time, I had no choice. How many people refuse it? None, right? There's your answer. I don't think people know how to accept to die."

When Cretella returned to Yale-New Haven, he was near the top of the list of transplant candidates. As his



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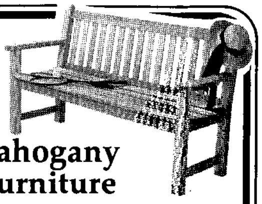

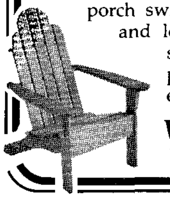

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angina worsened, his apprehension increased. But by then he had decided that, regardless of his fears, he would do everything that was required of him. The nurses' notes in the coronary-intensive-care unit describe his anxiety and his periodic depression, but they also describe a man who "is dealing well with his hospitalization, has a great attitude and is very hopeful."

"I actually changed my personality during that period of time," Cretella told me. "I'm not a person that's real outgoing, but I know how to do it. We made a joke out of it. The nurses were fantastic. They'd come in, they'd stay with me, we'd do stupid things. I stole my chart once in a while and I read the report: 'If he's not joking, something's wrong.' The joking was a step above—a step above what I am—so I could do what I had to do."

While all this was going on, Susan Cretella was trying to keep her mind on her job—she is a secretary—and on the logistics of commuting an hour each way to visit her husband almost every evening. The week that Cretella was told he had been put on the final donor list, Susan learned that her mother, who lived nearby, had been found to have brain cancer, requiring high-dose chemotherapy. The Yale-New Haven social workers put Susan in touch with the American Cancer Society, so that such burdens as her mother's transportation to the oncologist could be taken off her shoulders, but the strain of worry began to take increasing toll. Still, she somehow managed to remain a quiet, calming influence on her husband.

On the Thursday evening of Cretella's third week in the hospital, the cardiac-surgery resident, Dr. Christian Gilbert, came to the coronary-intensive-care unit to tell him that a potential donor heart was available. Cretella tried not to feel either too hopeful or too panicky; he had heard the same news a week earlier, only to be told after a few hours that the heart had not proved sound enough to use. This time, though, everything was just right. Not only was the donor blood type compatible but the new heart was exactly the right size to fit into the space that would be left when his own heart was removed.

Susan Cretella had just arrived home from New Haven when she got a phone call from her husband telling her the good news. She called his son and his two daughters, and his cousin, who had chauffeured her earlier in the day, and they all drove back to the hospital as fast as they could. When they entered the unit, they came upon a scene of celebration. Cretella was excited and joyful. "It was like a big party," he recalled. "The nurses and everybody were almost cheering. The whole place was ape-shit, the whole hospital. I started getting chest pain, so they loaded me up with Demerol, and I was flying. It was a big party."

THE New England Organ Bank, the central agency through which the Yale team focusses its transplantation efforts, had called Gail Eddy to report the availability of a potential donor heart at a large hospital in a Massachusetts city about a hundred and fifty miles from New Haven. The heart was that of a young man who lay brain-dead as a result of an event that had involved no injury to his body, and was being kept alive on a respirator. Although he had no chance of recovery, all his chest and abdominal organs were perfectly healthy.

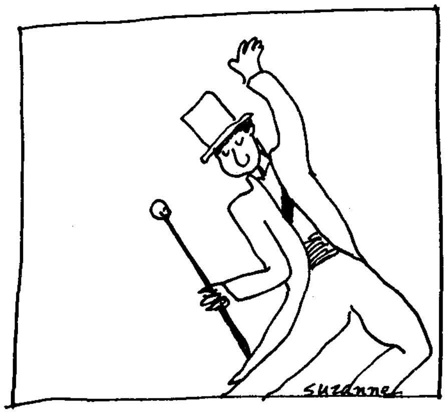
Shortly after midnight, a team under the direction of Dr. Graeme Hammond left Tweed-New Haven Airport in a twin-engine prop jet chartered by Yale-New Haven Hospital. George Letsou went along to act as Hammond's assistant. As always, Gail Eddy was with them to supervise every step. They touched down in the Massachusetts city around twelve-thirty and were taken by ambulance to the hospital. There they met with one of the frustrations that sometimes accompany this most complicated of medical undertakings. In those early-morning hours, only two operating rooms were functioning, and both were occupied with emergencies. The donor could not be brought in until one of them became vacant.

Meanwhile, the anesthesia team at Yale-New Haven, not having anticipated a delay, had brought Anthony Cretella up to the O.R. suite, transferred him to the cardiac room, and sedated him in preparation for the general anesthetic. The whole family accompanied him to the O.R., and as he was wheeled away from them, through the electronic swinging doors and into the sterile area, he gave them a broad smile and lifted his clenched fists in a victory salute.

When I arrived, at 2 A.M., the anesthesiologist, Dr. Kevin Morrison, was sitting in the darkened room with him, speaking in a soft, reassuring voice, trying to allay the fears that had by then returned. Cretella drifted off into a light doze, and I retreated to the surgeons' lounge and took a nap alongside a snoring interne. A little after five, I was awakened by a nurse touching my shoulder. Gail Eddy had called to say that the donor had been brought into the Massachusetts hospital's operating room, and that Hammond and Letsou were now preparing to start the harvesting procedure.

I always hesitate before using the word "harvest" to describe removal of a donor's organs for transplantation, and yet there is no better term for a process that is so like the gathering of a crop. A transplant team converges on the donor's hospital, coördinates its timing and surgical sequence down to minutes, and carries off the healthy fruits of life—sometimes liver and kidneys and pancreas and heart and lungs —which are then implanted in the bodies of people who would die without them. Cultivated with care and nourished with antibiotics and saline solutions, the organs usually thrive, and the patients who receive them usually recover well enough to live rewarding lives. It is all so new that our society has not yet got used to it as an everyday occurrence, which may be one reason that donor organs are so hard to come by. To most people, transplantation still seems futuristic. In 1988, more than fifteen hundred hearts, sixteen hundred livers, and nine thousand kidneys were transplanted, but, despite those impressive figures, thousands of people died waiting for a donor. More than twenty thousand potential donors are allowed to die each year with their organs unused, and therefore wasted, either because no one was willing to approach a family grieving over the sudden loss of a young loved one or because potential donors—and most of us are potential donors, even if only of skin—had not made a bequest when they were able to do so. Several European countries have approached the problem with what are called presumed-consent policies, by which physicians are empowered to presume that, unless the family objects, a brain-dead accident victim has consented to the use of his organs. Such policies have not yet been seriously considered in this country, and until they are, or until there is far greater awareness of the serious shortage of donors, organ availability will remain in its present hit-or-miss status, and patients will continue to die just because the rest of us don't understand their need.

Because I was with Anthony Cretella, I was not present at the harvest in Massachusetts, but I have witnessed the procedure several times, and I have heard the details of that early morning's work from Hammond and Letsou. The family of the young man had donated only his heart; ordinarily, permission is granted for several organs, and the heart is removed last. Being able to proceed without further delay simplified the Yale team's job, and, after Gail Eddy ascertained that the donor had been given the correct intravenous fluids and medications, and that his heart was functioning perfectly, the team went right to work. Hammond and Letsou split the chest, opened the pericardium, and cut away all the ligaments and tissue attached to the heart and to the great vessels—the venae cavae, the aorta, and the pulmonary arteries entering and leaving it. When they were ready to remove the heart, Eddy phoned Yale-New Haven, so that the transplant team there could begin to operate on Cretella. The donor had been given doses of steroids and antibiotics, and now his bloodstream was injected with the anticoagulant heparin to prevent clotting. The heartbeat was stopped with potassium solution. Gail Eddy noted the time as clamps were put on the great vessels. It was 5:34 A.M. The two surgeons now began to work very rapidly, freeing the heart and the vessels with long, swift cuts of their dissecting instruments. Twenty minutes later, Eddy phoned New Haven again—she and the surgeons were leaving the hospital. They carried the heart in the innermost of four concentric plastic containers, each filled with ice-cold salt solution, and the containers, in turn, were secured within an Igloo picnic cooler. It fell to George Letsou to cradle the Igloo on his lap as the ambulance sped to the airport. The waiting plane took off immediately and was soon landing in New Haven. Another dash to the hospital, and at six-fifty-two Eddy phoned the O.R. to say that they had arrived. The hospital-to-hospital sprint had taken exactly fifty-eight minutes.



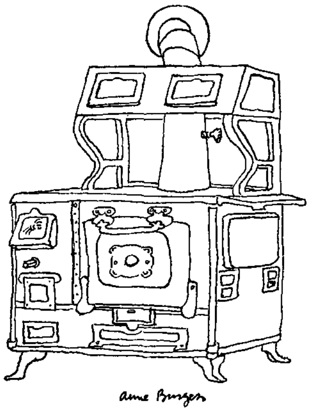
During that time, Anthony Cretella was being prepared to receive his new heart. He had been dosed with cyclosporine and Imuran, and would shortly receive a dose of steroids. He was loaded with carefully chosen antibiotics. As the surgical team was scrubbing, Kevin Morrison injected a rapid-acting anesthetic agent into Cretella's intravenous line and inserted an endotracheal breathing tube in his windpipe. When all the intravenous and arterial monitoring lines had been secured, Christian Gilbert sterilized the entire front of Cretella's body with an iodine antiseptic and put surgical drapes over the patient. A few minutes before the induction of anesthesia, Dr. John Baldwin, the chief surgeon of the transplant team, had come into the room. Baldwin does not smile easily—at least, not during working hours. He is a husky blond forty-one-year-old with a boyish appearance, but in the operating room he is all business, and he conducts himself in the quiet yet uncompromising manner of a man certain of his importance.

On the night of Anthony Cretella's operation, Baldwin was in the middle of his second year in New Haven. He had come from Stanford, where he was one of Norman Shumway's brightest stars in the world's foremost program of cardiac transplantation. His arrival had been heralded for months, and with good reason. Over the last decade, Yale's cardiothoracic-surgery section had declined to the point where it lagged far behind that of the school's other clinical departments. Two successive deans and a hardworking search committee had failed to persuade any appropriate candidate to take on the challenge of rebuilding the department. One after another, outstanding cardiothoracic surgeons would come to New Haven, survey the chairman's job, and pronounce it undoable.

To bring Baldwin to New Haven,

the dean of the medical school had promised him a great deal. Assured of unquestioned authority, and promoted to full professor in a matter of months, Baldwin had not hesitated to undertake a series of brusque campaigns in an attempt to establish his suzerainty not only over the territory understood to be his rightful surgical domain but also over territory traditionally within the jurisdiction of radiologists, cardiologists, and other groups. A summa-cum-laude graduate of Harvard College, a Rhodes Scholar, and one of the major contributors to the development of combined heart-lung transplantation, Baldwin has a rare combination of excellent surgical skill and first-class research ability. And he has supremely unrufflable self-confidence. You can't exchange more than a few sentences with Baldwin without recognizing his air of aloof assurance. Even praise seems redundant to a man so clear as to his own merit.

When all was ready, the members of the team took their places, and Gilbert, under Baldwin's instruction, made an incision through the scar left by Cretella's CABG. Next, he split the sternum up its middle with an oscillating saw. The dissection inside the chest was not easy. The previous surgery had left the heart encased in a mass of woody scar tissue, and it was tedious work to separate vital structures from their adhesions. At particular risk were the vein segments that had been grafted into the heart in the previous procedure. The difficulty was increased by a persistent ooze of blood from the scarred layers. Unlike many surgeons, Baldwin doesn't speak much while operating. What he says is restricted to instructions and comments on the work as it proceeds: "Just cut down onto it—don't screw around so much." "He's pretty juicy, this guy."



The dissection of the scarred tissues proceeded with meticulous care. At six-fifty-five, exactly eighty minutes after the incision, Cretella was given a dose of heparin to prevent his blood from clotting. In the early days of experimental heart surgery, the inability to inhibit the clotting mechanism and then to reverse the inhibition was a gigantic obstacle. It is now done with ease, using an injection of a single substance in a previously calculated amount, and a reversing agent when anticoagulation is no longer required.

The purpose of stopping Cretella's clotting mechanism was to prevent his blood from coagulating in the pump oxygenator—the machine that would take over the job of his heart and lungs during the actual transplantation. The pump oxygenator is a marvel of technology which, like the heart itself, seems deceptively simple in concept. Large tubes are placed in the venae cavae and connected to the machine, which diverts the blood from the heart and drains it into a reservoir; there it is pumped into an oxygen-filled chamber, where it spreads out onto the surface of a wide area of extremely thin polypropylene membrane. This arrangement imitates the way a normal lung functions, and allows the oxygen to pass easily through the membrane into the blood. The freshly oxygenated blood is then pumped back to the patient, and enters his body through a metal tube placed in the aorta. Simple as the principle is, it took more than two decades of single-minded effort before Dr. John Gibbon, of Philadelphia, was able to develop the heart-lung machine with which he carried out the first successful open-heart operation, in 1953. When I ran the pump oxygenator in Yale-New Haven's first open-heart operation, in 1956, the entire team and I had spent hundreds of hours in the laboratory preparing ourselves; today, young residents entering their training in cardiac surgery take the machine for granted.

After the heparin was injected, the tubes were placed, clamps were adjusted, and the bypass was begun. At seven-nineteen, Baldwin gave the order to turn down the thermostat on the pump oxygenator, in order to drop Cretella's body temperature to twenty-eight degrees centigrade, or about eighty-two degrees Fahrenheit. (At decreased temperatures, metabolism is lowered and blood-deprived tissues survive longer.) The aorta was clamped and then divided just above the heart, as was the main pulmonary artery, the conduit to the lungs. Cretella's heart was allowed its last few anemic beats, and then Baldwin and Gilbert cut it away from his body, leaving a rim of its back wall where the venae cavae enter the two atria—the collecting chambers that empty into the pumping ventricles.

The wonder of a beating heart is minor compared with the incomprehensibility of no heart at all. I stood at the head of the operating table alongside the anesthesiologist, staring down at the huge empty space in Cretella's chest. Though heartless, he lived, and even breathed—at least, in a sense. Seven feet away, soaking in its nutrient bath on a small steel table, the new heart waited. Hammond brought it over to the operating table, where Baldwin trimmed its aorta, pulmonary artery, and atria until they were exactly as he wished them. Without a hint of ceremony, the heart, which the team was now referring to as "the graft," was lowered into Cretella's chest, and Gilbert began to stitch it into its new home.

The two surgeons did not convey any sense of haste, or even of speed. They said very little to each other, and virtually nothing to the nurses and the anesthesiologist beyond sparse instructions. Baldwin directed the action in short, flat sentences, free of either encouragement or criticism. Gilbert knew how to do his job; a few words from his chief, and a very good stitch became a perfect one. There was an occasional warning of potential danger ahead, and a few tersely worded admonitions. I sensed the rapport of teamwork but no warmth. And there was none of the jocularity that surgeons so often use to lighten the tension when the stakes riding on each movement are so high. The scene reminded me of nothing so much as one of those old Hollywood movies in which two skilled safecrackers are working with exquisite care and no overt signs of hurry but always against the ticking of the clock.

What I witnessed was a painstaking and accurately placed series of polypropylene sutures that united the back wall of each donor atrium to the remaining rim of Cretella's own. The wall of the atrium is surprisingly easy to stitch; it has a yielding, elastic quality, which allows donor tissue and recipient tissue to bunch up against each other just enough to provide a snug, leakproof fit. The heart now lay in place, with a circular stump of hose-like orange-yellow aorta jutting out from its top, and the donor's coronary arteries lead from that short length of conduit. Gilbert circumferentially sewed this new aorta to the open end of Cretella's aorta, taking large and strong bites of tissue, so that the suture line would hold against the full force of the blood pressure soon to be exerted against it. When the suture line had been secured, the clamp across the aorta was removed, and blood freshly oxygenated by the machine poured into the coronary arteries to irrigate the muscle of Cretella's new heart. From the moment of clamping in the other city, the donor heart had been deprived of blood for two hours and forty-one minutes.

The last suture line is the one that unites the pulmonary arteries of the donor and of the recipient; it was now expeditiously completed. The heart belonged to Cretella. Nevertheless, it remained a little unsure of its new surroundings, and although it was filled with blood, and the bypass was reduced to only partial diversion, it seemed hesitant to begin its own automatic rhythm. Instead, it quivered, as though shy. It began the uncoördinated, every-which-way squirming of fibrillation. Baldwin tried to shock it into good behavior with a few jolts of electricity fired through paddle-shaped electrodes applied to the ventricles, but the heart remained resistant. He and Gilbert then stitched wires to the heart's surface and connected them with an external source of current—a pacemaker, which would force the beat.

The heart's reluctance was worrisome to me. Everyone who has witnessed enough transplants has seen a few in which, despite the pacemaker and the cardiac medications, the graft never does pick up the beat. But I may have been the only person in that room who was beginning to wonder whether Anthony Cretella had come so far only to lose his life to a diffident graft. Baldwin knew better, and so did his team. He waited patiently, adding now this myocardial stimulant and now that, and the beat gradually improved. After about forty-five minutes, it had strengthened to the point where it took on a vigorous, healthy tone. A few tiny leaks in the various suture lines were repaired, the heart-lung machine was stopped, and the bypass tubes were withdrawn. At nine-forty, a little more than two hours after his old, worn-out heart was removed, Anthony Cretella was on his own.

Protamine was given to reverse the heparin; a few large drainage tubes were brought out through the chest wall to suck away any accumulated blood; and the closure began. The breastbone was brought together with thick stainless-steel wires, and the skin was stapled. By eleven-thirty, Cretella was in a specially prepared isolation room of the intensive-care unit.

If I was asked what impressed me most about the prodigious feat I had just witnessed, the answer would come easily: it was the calmness of the thing. There was none of the buzzing, hyperactive flutter I have often observed when an operating team is self-conscious about the magnitude of its undertaking. There was no sense of excitement, of risk, or of impending danger which can sometimes seem to hover over such events. The pervading mood was low-key optimism and unquestioned expectation of accustomed success. Not only Baldwin and Gilbert knew their jobs thoroughly; so did everyone else, whether doctor, nurse, or technician. Baldwin had somehow instilled into the entire corps his attitude of "This is what we do, and we're good at it." His exalted self-confidence, which might elsewhere seem arrogance, found its proper place in that operating room, and took on the quality of command. For those two hours, Baldwin's presence at Yale was worth whatever it had cost, and perhaps more.

NEW life or no new life, Anthony Cretella refused to believe the evidence of his improvement. For the next three weeks, he needed plenty of nudging. He experienced bouts of pessimism that yielded easily to depression; being sequestered in the isolation room aggravated every black thought that came into his mind. Neither the cheerful efficiency of his nurses nor Gilbert's frequent reiteration that he was progressing well seemed to make a difference.

Gilbert, who is a veteran of many heart transplants, saw in his patient an extreme example of nervous disbelief. "He was about one of the most uptight guys I've met in a long time," he told me. "He was never really sure he was

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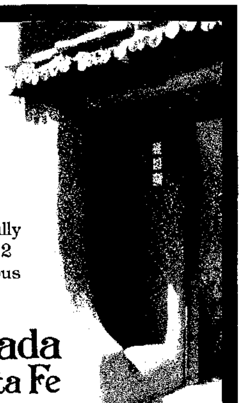

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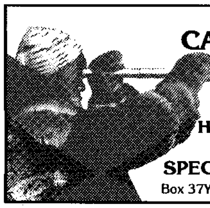

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doing O.K. He kept asking 'Am I doing all right?' and he never really believed us. He thought about every heartbeat and every hiccup."

Cretella saw it differently. "Gilbert was the best of them and I got the most out of him, but I had to push him," he said. "They'd come in with the whole team and they'd do all their stuff, and then they'd say, 'Oh, everything's going fine.' You'd be asking them questions and they'd be trying to get out the door. They kept saying the same thing: 'Don't worry about it, we'll fix it.' Every time I asked a question, they said, 'You have nothing wrong with you that we can't handle.' That's what they told me when my pulse was a hundred and seventy to two hundred for eighteen hours: 'Don't worry about it.' How do you not worry about it? They're a different breed of people."

Dr. Cohen had receded into the background. With Gail Eddy and the surgeons directing the over-all planning, his clinical role had become peripheral. "At that point, Cretella knew my visits were not necessary to his care," he said. "He knew that I came to see him really as a friend."

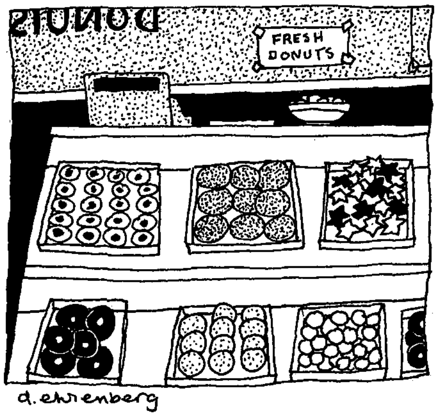
A friend was exactly what Cretella needed. It was Cohen to whom he could speak, and speaking to him made a difference. "Dr. Cohen would come down in the evenings and talk to me, to pump me up and encourage me," Cretella told me.

I asked Cohen about his patient's perception of the way he had been treated by the surgeons, and he said, "I think there *is* something different about cardiac surgeons, and particularly about cardiac-transplant surgeons. There is something about the mentality of a cardiac surgeon—he does play God, and I think he does feel that at some level he can fix everything. The downside of that, of course, is that if things don't turn out well it's someone else's fault—the cardiac surgeon is not to blame. It's the patient's fault, some member of the team's fault, some other department's fault. It's rare that I've heard a cardiac surgeon say, 'I fucked up.' It was very important to Cretella for him to maintain control—he's that sort of person. In a way, what he's saying in his complaints about the surgeons is that they don't let him have any control. Some patients are very happy to just place themselves in the total care of their surgeon, and really are encouraged when the surgeon says, 'Don't worry, I can take care of it.' But for the type of patient Cretella is, who needs to feel he is in control, that kind of response is infuriating."

A ROUTINE recovery is not necessarily an uncomplicated one. In spite of the immunosuppressive drugs, almost every patient experiences some degree of rejection of the donor organ in the early postoperative period. The diagnosis of rejection is made by direct biopsy of the heart muscle, and a biopsy is routinely done several times during the hospitalization and at greater intervals after discharge. Any evidence of trouble can be reported by the pathologist within a few hours of the biopsy, and when such evidence is found the trouble is treated with three days of increased steroids, and the patient usually responds with improvement.

I went up to the operating room to witness Cretella's first biopsy, on the seventh day after the transplant. Gilbert locally anesthetized the skin on the right side of the neck and inserted in the jugular vein a series of wires and catheters, the last of which was large enough to allow an instrument called a bioptome to be threaded down through it into the superior vena cava and then directly into the right ventricle. The bioptome is a flexible, wirelike probe with a pair of pincer-shaped jaws at its tip. Watching on a fluoroscope, Gilbert slowly advanced the bioptome toward the inside wall of Cretella's heart, and when the tip was pressed into the myocardium he squeezed the bioptome's handle. The pincers bit tightly down on a tiny wad of muscle, and he withdrew it. A waiting technician took the specimen directly to the pathology laboratory.

That first biopsy showed no sign of rejection. When the procedure was repeated, seven days later, there were some mild changes, so a course of increased prednisone was begun. The next biopsy, done after six days, indicated that the condition was resolving, but the one after that demonstrated a slight worsening, and three more days of high-dose prednisone were ordered. Finally, after a biopsy on August 11th, it was clear that the problem had been solved. The heart looked good, and Cretella was ready to go home.



He had left the intensive-care unit at the end of his second week; the mild rejection and a few days of slight temperature elevation were routine. But Cretella continued to be depressed. What finally relieved his joyless frame of mind was that he could no longer ignore the mounting evidence of his recovery. He finally became convinced that, like eighty per cent of all patients with transplanted hearts, he would be alive and well a year after his operation. In fact, having survived the surgery and the post-transplant hospitalization, he was in a category well above the eighty-per-cent group. In theory, at least, he stands a seventy-five-per-cent probability of being in good condition five years from now. If he resumes smoking, and cannot control his cholesterol, that figure will become fifty per cent, and might be as low as twenty per cent at seven years.

CRETELLA was discharged from the hospital on August 12th, and ten days later I drove to Mystic to visit him. The Cretellas live on the second floor of a three-story tenement across from the plant where he works. A hand-painted sign on the door read "WELCOME—SUE AND TONY," and their apartment was cheerful and pleasantly furnished. Sitting in their comfortable, scrupulously clean kitchen, I could understand the importance of Susan Cretella's influence on her husband. While I was there, a radio in the next room was softly playing popular tunes of the fifties and sixties—the salad days of both Cretellas—and at one point I could hear Brenda Lee singing "All alone with just the beat of my heart."

We talked about tobacco, and we talked about liquor. (Cretella is a hard social drinker, and there have been times in his life when he has been more than that.) I was not encouraged by his answers to my questions—especially when I asked if he thought he could stand by his resolve to stay away from cigarettes the rest of his life.

"I hope so," he said. "But I'd never say no about anything. I don't believe in that. I would never say, 'I'll do this or that for the rest of my life'—not tomorrow or any part of my life. Booze I've always been able to control. I've stopped for as long as three months at a time. Cigarettes are something different—no control. And I've tried. I mean, I quit for six months after I had the bypass. I can't tell you how many times I quit for two or three weeks. I'm not saying just now I can quit for keeps. I have no idea what I'll be like tomorrow, a week from now, or a year from now. You smoke and drink because you feel shitty all the time. I was even tempted to take drugs, but I never did. I always felt I was hooked on cigarettes. I can get pissed off with myself for drinking and quit, but I don't know if I can do it with cigarettes."

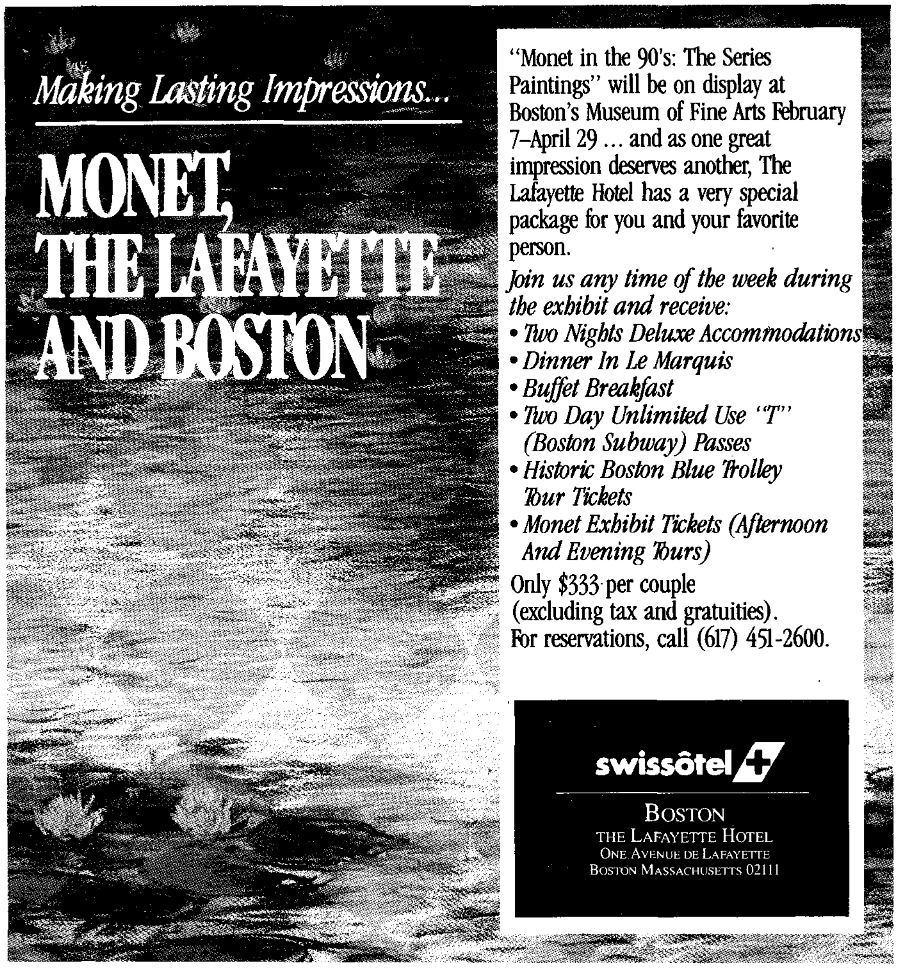
Toward the end of my visit, our conversation turned to a topic I had been hesitant to bring up. What does it feel like to live with another person's heart beating in your chest? It proved to be something Cretella was trying very hard not to think about.

"I don't know yet," he said. "I really don't know yet. When I catch myself thinking about it, I try to forget about it. You know—I think, What is it? A female? A male? Black? Orange? White?"

I asked him what he would want it to be.

"I don't know that yet, either. I can't answer any questions like that at all. I even get upset talking to you about it. When I talk about it, I get paranoid. I think mainly it's because I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, and the reason for that is that I can be sitting here feeling fine and all of a sudden something clicks and I get nervous and everything just starts going. Something in my body changes, as if somebody pushed a button. I talked to another transplant patient—he's in his fifth year—and he says it still happens to him."

Susan Cretella said that her husband occasionally seems to go into a trance, sometimes for hours at a time. He seems to be thinking about nothing, she said, but his mind is really trying to escape those thoughts about whose heart he is carrying. Of course, I couldn't give him details, but I did attempt to reassure him, as several of his doctors had done, by telling him of



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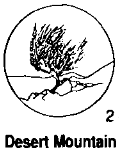

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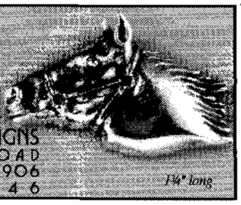

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But the health of the donor was not what concerned him; it was something far more complex. I told him, "The donor was the kind of person whose heart you would be proud to have in you. I'm talking about character, about the kind of person it was."

Even that was not exactly what Cretella had in mind. "When you say the kind of person, what do you mean?" he said. "Race, or color, or everything? One of the things—I didn't know if it would worry me—was whether it was black or not. I think that would bother me. It came up in my mind one day. Because, you know, they tell you it doesn't make any difference what kind of heart you get. And I'm sitting there thinking, I don't believe that, I honestly don't believe it. You know, a female heart or a Chinese heart or a black heart, a boy's heart or a man's heart. These people have different stuff in their body. I don't care how many tests they've taken. Everybody tells me what a perfect heart I got—well, you know."

Cretella's deep-brown eyes looked troubled when he finished speaking. The momentary alteration in his appearance was surprising, because it was so unlike the usual changelessness of his expression. He told me he was concerned that I might construe his comments to have what he called a "discriminatory" tone. But I doubt whether feelings like his arise from simple bigotry. I think they have to do with that inherent rejection of otherness—the ancient xenophobia we have learned from every cell in our bodies and from every cell that has ever existed on earth. It is Gaspare Tagliacozzi's "force and power of individuality" that makes Anthony Cretella torment himself about "the different stuff" that has been implanted in his chest. It torments me, too, because I worry about the possibility that this psychic form of xenophobia might in some way contribute to eventual rejection of his donor heart.

As I drove back to New Haven, I thought about the heart itself and the skills of the surgeons who operate on it. I thought also about xenophobia and the vestiges of earliest life carried in our cells through millions of years of evolution. But more than anything else I thought about my renewed concern for Anthony Cretella's future. And I thought also about something that Dr. Cohen had told me. "People who have had cardiac transplants sometimes think they can extend the fact that they now have a young heart into many other spheres of their lives," he said. " 'So now I'm going to feel like I'm twenty-five; now I can run like I did at twenty-five; now I'll be as sexually active as I was at twenty-five.' It's as if their heart were their total life and body. The fact that their liver might be fifty or their brain might be fifty or their legs might be fifty is irrelevant—they have the heart of a young person." Such misconceptions can be as fatal as cigarettes, cholesterol, or rejection. For Cretella to achieve his full measure of longevity, he will have to fulfill Cohen's confidence in his ability to transform his way of life.

ON the morning of Cretella's discharge, I had visited his room for the last time, to bid him goodbye and good health. He stood at his bathroom mirror shaving; he was actually cheerful. We chatted for a few minutes, and I prepared to leave. And then there occurred one of those small events which have convinced me that, at least in the minds of its craftsmen, cardiac transplantation has become a procedure that, if not exactly commonplace, is well beyond its pioneer phase. The door of the room swung open, and standing there was Dr. Kenneth Franco, one of Baldwin's associates. Cretella took a few steps toward him, but Franco held up his palm, like a policeman stopping traffic, to indicate that it wasn't necessary for Cretella to dry his lather-soaked fingers for a handshake or to advance another inch. "Well, anyway," Cretella said, "thanks for everything you did." He might as well have been expressing appreciation for a proffered Kleenex. Franco's reply came in the flat, unemotional tone that characterizes the Baldwin team's approach. "No problem," he said.

—SHERWIN B. NULAND

•

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[*Will McDonough in the Boston Globe*]

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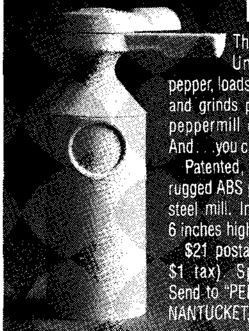

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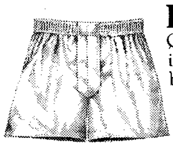

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JAZZ

B.G.

Benny Goodman sometimes gave the impression that he would live forever. Like most prolific virtuosos, he was difficult to keep in focus. He made a pass at retiring when he was forty, but he kept reappearing with a new group or a new recording. He was the first important jazz musician to play classical music—a seeming trespass that caused bewilderment and concern among the faithful of both persuasions. His image gradually changed from severity (rimless glasses, patent-leather hair, business suits) to geniality (horn-rims, tousled hair, tweed jackets). He disappeared into his own legend, which decreed that he was a monster—a penny-pinching, thoughtless martinet, who bullied his sidemen and hogged the solo space. It was often said after he reached fifty that his abilities had declined. Yet, however uneven he may occasionally have sounded (he was plagued by depressions and back problems), he played almost as well at the end of his career as he had at the beginning.

But Benny died in 1986, at the age of seventy-seven, and the recent appearance of James Lincoln Collier's biography, "Benny Goodman and the Swing Era" (Oxford; $22.95), suggests that it is time to tally the results. There were a lot of Benny Goodmans: the pioneer jazz virtuoso who made the clarinet as important a solo instrument as the trumpet was in the thirties; the unwitting and perhaps unwilling musical evangelist who, in 1935, introduced the young of this country to their own great native music, aerating their Depression lives and making them dance like Shakers; the tough Chicago boy who married a Vanderbilt; and the second-generation Russian Jew who became one of the most famous of the extraordinary legion of Russian Jews which has graced American music for the greater part of this century.

Goodman was the ninth of twelve children. His father worked in the stockyards, and his mother was illiterate. He studied with the classical clarinettist Franz Schoepp, who also taught Jimmy Noone and Buster Bailey. He joined the musicians' union when he was thirteen and Ben Pollack's band when he was sixteen. He worked for Pollack on and off from 1925 to 1929, in company with Glenn Miller, Jack Teagarden, Bud Freeman, and Jimmy McPartland. From 1929 to 1934, when he formed his first big band, he scuffled in New York, playing in Broadway pit bands and doing radio shows, and recording with everyone from Bessie Smith to Enrique Madriguera and Ruth Etting. In 1934, his band became one of three bands chosen to play on a weekly three-hour NBC program called "Let's Dance." "If anyone were to ask what was the biggest thing that has ever happened to me," Goodman once told this writer, "landing a place on that show was it." A year later, at the behest of his booker, Willard Alexander, he took his band on the road. They played Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Denver, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco without much success. But when they got to Sweet's Ballroom, in Oakland, the NBC show had begun to take effect, and there were lines around the block, and it was eventually the same at the Palomar, in Los Angeles, where they were held over for a month. They stopped at the Congress Hotel, in Chicago, on their way east, and stayed six months. They had the country jumping. Back in New York, they had a long engagement at the Hotel Pennsylvania, then went west again to do the Palomar and make a movie. They were at the Pennsylvania in the fall of 1936, and during the winter they made their uproarious appearance at the Paramount Theatre; the audiences, thoroughly worked over by Goodman's recordings and almost daily radio broadcasts, danced in the aisles, stood on their seats, and sometimes stayed through all five shows. In January of 1938, Goodman reached an apogee when, still the unwitting ground-

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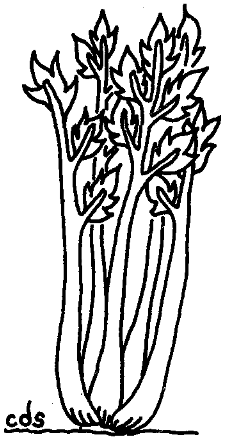
breaker, he gave his famous Carnegie Hall concert. (It was a press agent's idea.) With the exception of Jess Stacy's "Sing, Sing, Sing" solo, the evening was not musically prepossessing, but the concert gave jazz a stature it had not had before.

By this time, the band included the trumpeters Ziggy Elman and Harry James, the pianist Jess Stacy, the drummer Gene Krupa, and the small-group specialists—the pianist Teddy Wilson and the vibraphonist, drummer, and singer Lionel Hampton. The personnel of Goodman's bands rarely remained fixed for more than a week. He constantly fired musicians, or they quit, offended by his capricious, high-handed behavior. He had a particularly hard time with drummers, who he once said were his "enigma." Here is an incomplete list of the drummers, stars and journeymen, who passed through his bands between the mid-thirties and the mid-forties: Sammy Weiss, Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, Dave Tough, Buddy Schutz, Nick Fatool, Harry Jaeger, Jo Jones, J. C. Heard, Sidney Catlett, Ralph Collier, Alvin Stoller, Howard Davis, Morey Feld, Buddy Rich, Louis Bellson, Lou Fromm, Tom Romersa, Don Lamond, and Cozy Cole. Duke Ellington used one drummer, Sonny Greer, from the mid-twenties to 1951.



For whatever reasons—perhaps it was an unconscious wish to keep the competition down within his band—Goodman never hired any first-rate trombonists or tenor saxophonists. (Goodman could be inscrutable. In 1938, he borrowed Lester Young from Count Basie for a recording date, and in the course of six numbers allowed Young one eight-bar solo.) This most famous of the Goodman bands was peculiarly sandwiched between the frenetic trumpet playing of Elman and James and the heavy, here-we-go-down-the-pike drumming of Gene Krupa, with Goodman as its main soloist, providing filigree and decoration. The band never had the subtlety and lyricism and shading of Basie and Ellington and Andy Kirk. It was a very white band, and relied on bravado and muscle. It tended to shout when it played "Bugle Call Rag" and "King Porter Stomp," and to breathe heavily in slow ballads.

Goodman's next and most important band was altogether different. It began to take shape in the late thirties, after James and Krupa departed and Goodman switched record labels, from Victor to Columbia. He hired the great lead trumpeter Jimmy Maxwell and, in the next year or two, the trumpeters Cootie Williams (from Ellington) and Billy Butterfield (from Artie Shaw), the guitarist Charlie Christian, the trombonist Lou McGarity (a Jack Teagarden admirer who came as close to being first-rate as any Goodman trombonist), the pianist Mel Powell, and, in 1941, the bassist John Simmons and the drummer Sid Catlett. And the satiny arranger Eddie Sauter took over. But this graceful band didn't last long. Christian fell ill and died, Simmons and Williams left, Catlett was fired, Billy Butterfield went with Les Brown, and Mel Powell was drafted. The musicians'-union recording ban, which went into effect in the summer of 1942 and lasted almost two years, was the final stroke. Toying occasionally with bebop, which he never liked much, Goodman had a series of middling bands in the late forties. He had, by then, made close to a hundred recordings with his small groups, many of them among the finest of all jazz records. Then, crippled by the popularity of singers and by a thirty-percent wartime entertainment tax, the big bands began to fail, and in 1948 Goodman gave up his band. The most successful part of his career was over; it had lasted just thirteen years. For the rest of his life, he put together a seemingly endless succession of big and small bands for State Department tours, for night-club gigs and television shows, for recording sessions, and even for a fortieth-anniversary celebration of his Carnegie Hall concert. This reconstituted evening remains vivid only because he had three pianists shuttling on- and offstage (Jimmy Rowles, John Bunch, Mary Lou Williams), a girl singer he had first heard a week or so before, and a finale in which he sat down and played with his feet up on one end of Lionel Hampton's vibraphone.

Goodman played a demanding instrument with almost unfailing beauty for fifty years—an extraordinary stretch, unmatched by any other jazz musician. Buddy DeFranco once explained why the clarinet is hard to play: "The clarinet's three registers—chalumeau, middle, and altissimo—are built in twelfths. If you press the octave key on a saxophone, you go up or down an octave, but on a clarinet you go twelve tones—from, say, low F to middle C. Saxophones have pads over the air holes. When you press a key, the pad closes the hole and you get a note. Clarinets have seven tone holes and no pads, and you have to close them with the ends of your fingers. So you have to have absolute finger control. If any air escapes, you get a terrible squeak or no note at all. Going from the middle register of the clarinet to the altissimo is very awkward because the fingering changes completely. That's the reason so many clarinettists seem to lose control when they go into the top register, why they tend to shriek." Goodman had a full, even tone in all three registers. But it never got in the way of his playing. It never came first, as it often did in the work of Pee Wee Russell and Edmond Hall and Irving Fazola. He was a melodic improviser, and his attack—the snapping runs, the quick, almost epigrammatic melodies, the carefully screened emotion, the rhythmic surefootedness—invariably implied that he knew where his solo would land long before it got there. Goodman's style changed little. In the thirties and the early forties, he would occasionally growl and carry on, but later he abandoned such emotional yawing and became almost academic. After he married gentry and became a Connecticut gentleman, his playing always had a press.

James Lincoln Collier writes in a deep-voiced, admonitory tone, and when you start reading him you believe everything he says. But then you notice that he gets things wrong and that his vision is slightly askew. He gives a page and a half to Benny's infamous firing of Sidney Catlett, who is often considered the greatest of all jazz drummers. Collier admits that he was good, but counters this with a quote from the old *down beat* scholar George Hoefer, who wrote that Catlett could be "tense, sullen and agitated." This contradicts the opinion of every musician who worked with Catlett. The pianist Mel Powell, who played in wonder alongside Catlett for four months in Goodman's Columbia band, recalled recently that the drummer was a "gentle, well-disposed, sweet" person. Farther down the page, Collier says that Catlett was "noisy, showy and difficult." This is nonsense. Catlett never played a noisy note in his life. He had grown up in the twenties, when all jazz musicians were expected to learn some sort of showmanship, but he was never a hot dog. He was so "difficult" that before he played with someone he had never played with before he would ask him how he would like to be accompanied. Catlett, the most powerful of big-band drummers, just drove the band *and* Goodman too hard: on some of the air checks made of the band during the summer of 1941, Goodman, with Catlett pushing him mercilessly, sounds almost out of control.

Collier has gathered important information from James T. Maher, who studied Goodman for almost fifty years, and from Mel Powell, and he gives proper credit to Helen Oakley Dance, who persuaded Goodman to hire Teddy Wilson in 1935. But much of the rest of the book is undistinguished. The prose is often hasty and clumsy. Collier's descriptions of Goodman's playing are not illuminating, nor are his descriptions of various Goodman recordings. He asserts that Goodman could be thoughtless, exasperating, and even cruel to the people who worked for him, but he doesn't have much news about how Goodman got that way. He never bothers to examine Goodman's Russian-Jewish musical heritage, or explain where Benny got the savvy to grow rich. Good biography attempts to take us into the presence of its subject and then lets us listen and watch and absorb. But Collier never takes us past the foyer.

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

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O PIONEERS DEPARTMENT

[*From the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*]

LAST WEEK: A team of outside law-enforcement officers arrived to review the operations of the troubled Delray Police Department. They are to issue a report of their findings within a month. A citizens' committee met to begin the search for a new city.

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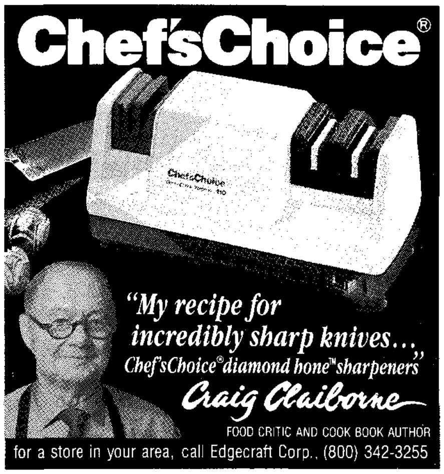
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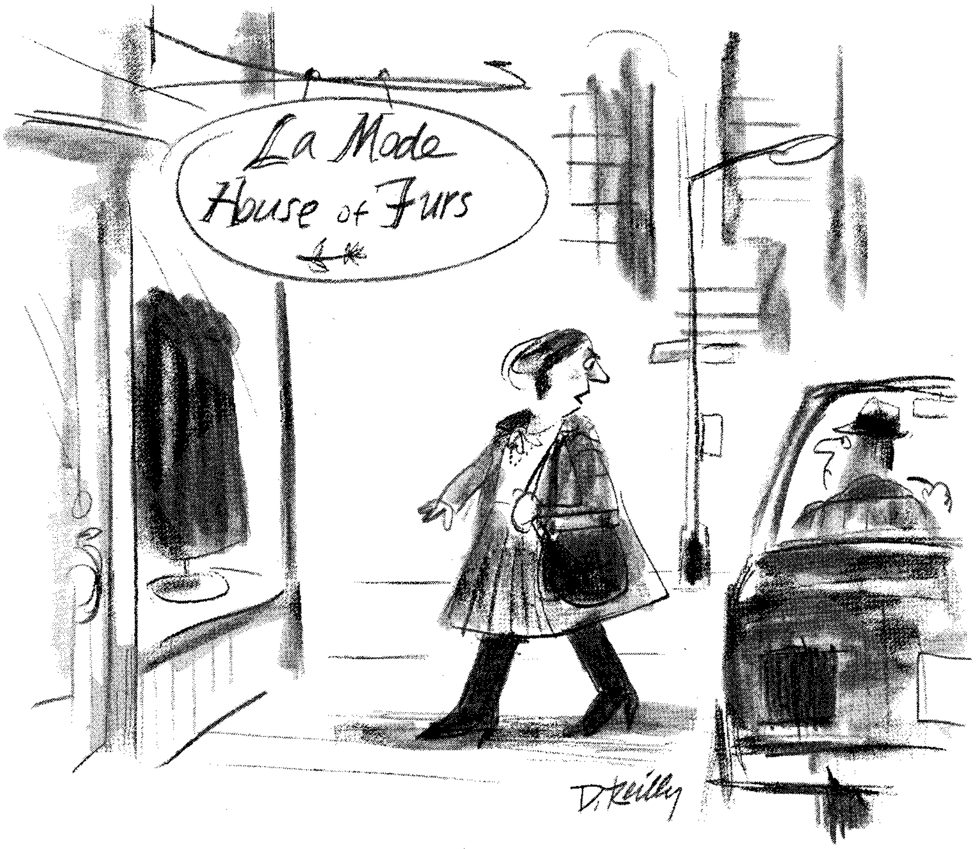
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

FEBRUARY 8

HAVING chosen not to lead or to draw on his tremendous popularity, President Bush has done, from his point of view, the next best thing—or perhaps the best thing—politically. He is demanding that Congress act on his proposals on popular subjects—clean air (code for the environment), drugs (code for crime), education, child care—and has tossed in Congress's lap a budget that avoids hard choices and that he and his advisers knew Congress (and not just Democrats) wouldn't much like. As the lawmakers stew over the budget, and, as is probable, get into a stalemate, the Congress can be even more discredited. Some here (and not just Democrats) believe the Administration was deliberately setting Congress up for stalemate. It doesn't get much more cynical than this. Meanwhile, the President will go off and do what he most enjoys: focus on foreign policy and travel about the country. (Bush, a restless man, loves to travel.) This being an election year, the White House hopes to have the President make at least one campaign stop a week, and there are some major foreign-policy meetings on the President's schedule—spaced so as to periodically get our attention.

It probably shouldn't be surprising (even if it's disappointing) that Bush has chosen not to address the major domestic problems the nation faces. He isn't very interested in domestic issues—other than those that serve his immediate political purposes—and doesn't seem to know a great deal about them. Though he sets domestic goals rhetorically, he doesn't seem to have them internally; he gives no sense of being really determined, ready to work very hard, to get to a certain point on a difficult domestic matter by a certain year. He doesn't have, to use a word he doesn't like very much, "vision." He does give the sense that he is doing what has been adjudged necessary to deal with an issue politically. All of this follows directly from wanting the Presidency very badly without knowing what he wanted to do with it. Furthermore, Bush is not one for taking big risks. An intensely competitive man, he will take one occasionally—as he did right after Congress returned, when he gambled and won on a vote in the Senate to sustain his veto late last year of a bill that would have given permanent-residence status to Chinese students here who do not wish to return to China for fear of persecution. In that case, Bush drew on Party loyalty, persuading enough Republican senators, most of whom did not agree with him, not to deliver him a political defeat at the outset of the new session of Congress. (Because Bush hadn't been expected to win this fight, his success in getting the votes of all of thirty-seven Republicans, after a big effort, was portrayed as a tremendous achievement.) But the veto fight was illustrative of Bush's self-confidence in foreign policy, especially on the subject of China. This is something he feels he knows a great deal about (even if, to many minds, he gets it wrong), and something he is very interested in—as opposed to domestic issues. He also feels very strongly about what he sees as the President's prerogatives in managing foreign policy. But a number of people here, left to right, wondered whether it was wise for him to want the onus for China policy all to himself.

Finally, it would in fact be politically difficult—though not impossible—for the President to effect big changes in the domestic area. It is no accident that Bush is, according to several analysts, exactly where the majority of the American people are. In an era when polling registers every twitch of the body politic, it is no great trick to figure out what is the popular thing. Recent polling for NBC and the *Wall Street Journal* by Peter Hart, a Democratic analyst, and Robert Teeter, the President's pollster, found that while the public is for spending more for the homeless, education, the environment, and for doing more about drugs, and for more health care, and is even very serious about doing something about the deficit, it is very much against raising taxes (except "sin taxes," on alcohol and tobacco). The public has, after all, been "educated" for the last nine years on the horridness of taxes, even though Reagan raised them several times, and in that period there was in fact a shift of the tax burden from the better off to the working class. If Bush did attempt to make a serious effort to reduce the deficit, to truly transform our education system and lift Americans' skills, to stem the disaster in our inner cities, he would have to take political risks—large ones. Peter Hart says, "The problem is, if



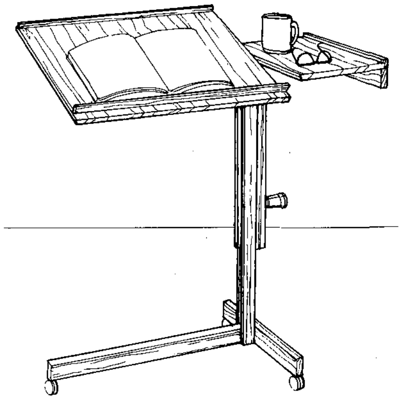
"Just stay out here with the motor running."

you're looking to the American public for leadership, it doesn't have any to offer." (The Democrats follow the polls, too, which is why they have been incoherent on the subjects of doing more and how to pay for it.) There is a circular effect here: lacking the knowledge and the "vision," Bush lacks the drive that could enable him to overcome the public's disinclination to make hard choices, and therefore he doesn't make them himself. A Republican analyst says, "If Bush were willing to risk his Presidency, I think he has the votes to raise taxes, to raise certain spending, to end twenty to thirty dead-end programs, and to reduce the deficit a little bit more. If he would take that risk, he might pull it off, but he doesn't want to." So he sends Congress a budget that tinkers around the edges, does just enough to preëmpt the Democrats on the popular issues (it is he who will ultimately sign the bills), and moves on.

ALL the political buttons were pushed in the President's State of the Union address, probably Bush's most effective speech since the 1988 Republican Convention. This is a relative statement, since he's not great at the set pieces; in fact, verbalizing isn't his strength. His popularity—currently an unprecedented approval rating of about eighty per cent—stems from people seeing Bush as a likable man, as doing a good job in handling foreign policy, in a period of economic growth. There is also the question of what is the alternative. Interviews conducted by Teeter and observed by Republican Chairman Lee Atwater and his deputy, Mary Matalin, with two focus groups in Chicago on the day after the speech found that although few had actually seen Bush deliver it, people had a positive impression of it, especially of his proposal to reduce the number of American troops in Europe. None of the interviewees even knew that the Democrats had made a televised response to the President's speech and only one person in the collective group of forty-two people had ever heard of House Speaker Thomas Foley, who had given the Democrats' response. (None had heard of Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. The only Democratic leader they could name was Jesse Jackson.)

In his address to Congress and the nation last week, Bush said he was for the right things, told parents to read to their children, and—as shameless as Reagan ever was—read a farewell letter a young serviceman had written to his mother just before he was sent to Panama, where he was killed in action. Bush's mention of Panama ("Today, democracy is restored") got big cheers from his audience, mostly from Republicans, who in time-honored tradition rose to their feet to cheer and applaud their President at every opportunity, often shaming their Democratic counterparts into joining in. (Almost all of the Democrats who had misgivings about the invasion of Panama had remained silent in the face of such a popular act.) Spontaneity departed from these ceremonies a long time ago. The President's announcement that he would recommend further reductions of American troops in Europe was another shrewd political move. One of his top political advisers says, "It was brilliant as a pure strategic move. The one legitimate complaint the Democrats could have made was that defense spending was still too high, given what's been going on. But that would look ludicrous when the President's talking about cutting almost a hundred thousand troops. The Democrats had only one prop—too much spending on defense—and he knocked that prop out. That's particularly important to the baby boomers."

Making use of a handy Presidential device, Bush "instructed" Louis Sullivan, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to lead a Cabinet-level review of the ballooning costs of health care, which, as it happens, Sullivan's Department was already studying. Large problems of cost and coverage of medical care (over thirty million people have no coverage at all), particularly long-term care, have bedevilled Congress as well as Administrations for some time. Last year's panicky repeal of the catastrophic-illness health-insurance program, only a year after it had been enacted, in the face of protests mostly by the better-off elderly against paying a new surtax, has left politicians chary of touching the subject again for a while. (In the meantime, the cost of private insurance to cover the gaps in Medicare coverage has gone up.) As if it were a big deal, the President listed "goals" for our education system, but they resembled closely the goals announced after an "education summit" in Williamsburg, Virginia, last Sep-



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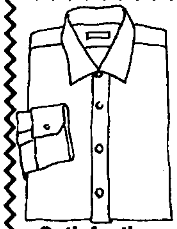

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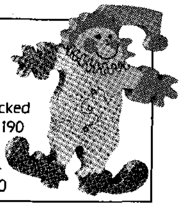

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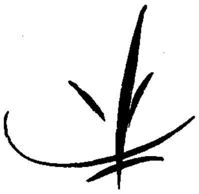
tember. The goals are fine, but the President suggested no way to get there. The President said that he is proposing a "record high" federal expenditure for education. But while Richard Darman, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, also says that the budget submitted at the beginning of last week proposes "record levels" of federal spending for education, the increase doesn't keep up with inflation, and some education programs are being cut. The Administration has made much of its proposed increase of five hundred million dollars for the Head Start program, which provides various forms of help for preschool children from poor families, and which has been a proven success. But if, as the Administration says, a one-billion-dollar increase would serve all needy preschool children (child-advocacy groups say the cost would be higher), why not provide the money rather than lose a large portion of another generation of preschool children?

The President's budget contains many similar shell games, if not always new ones. As has been the case for years now, the budget makes optimistic economic assumptions, masks real costs, makes questionable "savings," employs accounting gimmicks, and proposes cuts that Congress has already rejected several times. By such stretching and pulling and sliding, it "meets" the deficit goal of sixty-four billion dollars required by the Gramm-Rudman law. In November, just before it adjourned, Congress was deemed, by itself and by Darman, to have met the required target of a deficit of a hundred billion dollars; but now, only two months later, it is said to have been off by from twenty-four billion (O.M.B.'s figure) to thirty-eight billion (the Congressional Budget Office's figure). But these petty details don't deter all parties from going through the charade once again; doing the real thing would be just too difficult. Predictably, the Democrats in Congress once again greeted the budget with sputtering and outrage, and those Republicans who care at all about being responsible despaired quietly, but if tradition holds they will all end up collaborating with the Administration in an exercise in unreality, because doing the alternative is even more distasteful.



One device the Administration seeks to employ to meet the Gramm-Rudman target is simply not to count the fifty billion dollars more that it says is now needed to bail out the savings and loan institutions. Last year, fifty billion dollars was approved for S. & L.s, none of it counted in the 1990 budget that was then being worked on. By some estimates, the cleanup of the S. & L. mess will take another two hundred billion dollars within the next few years. One thing a number of people wonder is why the money can be found for this purpose when it can't for so many other ones.

THIS year, the budget was accompanied by an unusual introductory essay by Darman, in which he warned of the large future liabilities that government has assumed through various insurance and credit programs. Darman said in his essay that Medicare hospital insurance alone has an unfunded liability of over two hundred and fifty billion dollars, and he cited various other programs that insure against certain risks, such as natural disasters, overseas private investment, and nuclear accidents, without any provision for funds to pay for them. Darman said that these obligations amount to an "intimidating total." Unfortunately, Darman, who has an almost fatal inclination to be cute, described the budget as a "Cookie Monster" ("Its excessive tendencies toward consumption are not exactly ennobling") and the unfunded liabilities as "hidden Pac-men" ("waiting to spring forward and consume another line of resource dots in the budget maze")—and in the same essay he also told members of Congress that they had "an obligation to be serious."

Darman's budget document points to a number of serious long-range problems the country is facing—its low savings rate (the lowest of the seven major industrial nations) and its disinclination to invest in the future—without suggesting serious remedies for these problems. At the same time, the Administration is bringing pressure on the Federal Reserve System to lower interest rates, though one important cause of the higher rates is the continuing real size of the deficit—making it necessary for the United States to offer rates that are competitive internationally so as to lure the necessary foreign funds to help pay off the debt, as well as to help finance the bailout of the S. & L.s. The Fed is also concerned about the rate of inflation, which was 4.8 per cent last year, the highest since 1982. (Darman openly criticized the Fed last year, but he has been muzzled by the White House, because such criticism causes too much tension with Fed chairman Alan Greenspan and can hurt our efforts at stabilizing international currency rates. Darman has sought instead to get friendly senators to do it for him.) The real problem is that taxes are insufficient to support the present level of government services, and the deficit is the result. In the Reagan years, the size of the national debt tripled, to nearly three trillion dollars. (Congress appropriated little more than the Administration asked, even if it moved the money around.) Bush recently told a convention of home builders that he favors lower taxes and lower interest rates. The home builders, naturally, were pleased with the chimera the President laid before them. The Administration's sniping at the Fed is a blame-shifting device, in case things go very wrong in the economy—the President's political advisers seem almost at pains to point out that the only thing they think could hurt Bush would be a recession—and there are also this year's midterm elections, in which both parties have a great stake, because the results will affect redistricting in all of the states, which can affect the makeup of their congressional delegations.

The sad thing about Darman's exercise is that there probably has been no single person in many years who would be more capable of designing and bringing off serious budgetary reform (and this includes David Stockman). Darman has an exceptionally good mind—many people (perhaps including him) think he is the smartest person in Washington. Having served as a high White House official and then as Deputy Treasury Secretary during the Reagan Administration, he came into his current job better equipped than anyone in a long time (Stockman, who came from the House of Representatives, included). Moreover, in his White House job Darman had close exposure to, and even participated in, Stockman's games. Darman has the ability to think several steps ahead, which is essential to functioning here,

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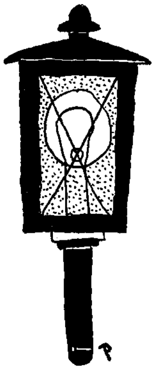
but a little wiliness goes a long way, and members of Congress don't particularly enjoy the experience of being diddled. They certainly don't enjoy having the world observe their endiddlement, yet Darman's schemes have a way of becoming known. Further, Darman, a man of genuine wit who is capable of real charm, has an unfortunate tendency to smirk—actually and figuratively. The term "Darmanesque," coined by former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker, has come to mean convoluted, tricky. Last year, key members of Congress, including some Republicans, came to resent Darman for his continuing to push the President's proposal to cut the tax on capital gains long after it was clear that such a move wouldn't succeed, and thus delaying Congress in its efforts to finish up its work. But in this, as in many other matters, Darman was also serving his masters.



It is known that Bush selected Darman to head the O.M.B. only after overcoming his own misgivings about him, a process Darman encouraged in the course of the 1988 campaign. Next, Darman set out to establish a good working relationship with John Sununu, the President's chief of staff. Sununu's self-regard as to his own intelligence is more than adequate, and he has a combustible temper and a strong sense of his place in the President's hierarchy. Many people here thought that the egotists Darman and Sununu would be at each other's throats, but that underestimated Darman, who has taken care to cultivate Sununu as well as the President. There was, of course, a price for Darman's success within the White House: he wasn't able to achieve last year what he had most hoped for—a serious budget deal, or "grand compromise," with Congress which would have included cuts in the very expensive entitlement programs and also increased revenues. A year ago, Darman gave the clear impression around town that he hoped for such a deal, and thought he could turn the President around on his campaign pledge of "no new taxes." Such a deal never materialized in part because of the bitterness caused by the capital gains fight, in part because the President wasn't interested in abandoning his pledge. He took the pledge, it may be remembered, largely with an eye to winning New Hampshire, where there are no state income taxes, and where his candidacy was on the line, and where he was rescued by then governor John Sununu. Since then, Sununu has remained an enforcer of the pledge, as he has of other issues (such as abortion) of importance to the right. Other political advisers also want Bush to keep to the tax pledge, arguing that it is of great value to the Republican Party as well as to himself. One adviser pointed out to me that there are few things that people remember about Bush's 1988 campaign: no new taxes, points of light, kinder and gentler—and that's about it. (Actually, there are some other things people remember, but not ones of advantage to Bush.) The White House has always been a little vague when it came to the question of whether the pledge would be held to for all of Bush's first term—deliberately so, because officials there still don't want to commit the President to something he may have to go back on. And there are in fact about fourteen billion dollars in new taxes in the budget—disguised as "user fees" and the like.

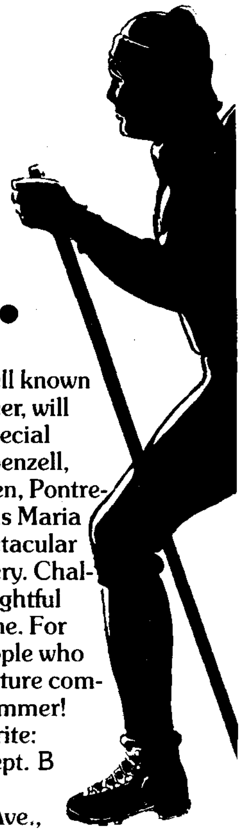
Darman is now more circumspect in talking about any possible "grand compromise," since he was so exposed on the subject last year. (He also talked about such a thing throughout the Reagan Administration.) When asked, in a recent appearance on "Meet the Press," whether he had given up on the idea, he said, "I think it would be sensible, if we could do it, to have a large-scale compromise. . . . But unfortunately the political system doesn't always act in the way that makes more sense." Still, there's reason to think that he hasn't given up on the idea, or on the thought that if Congress makes enough concessions—beginning to cope with the looming costs of the credit and insurance programs (through reforming them and perhaps beginning to pay reasonable annual installments), reform of the budget process, restraint of Medicare—there could be a deal, one that included revenues. In his "Meet the Press" appearance, Darman didn't exactly cling to Bush's "no new taxes" pledge. ("I personally have never made the pledge. The President has made the pledge.") But it is not at all out of the question that Congress and the White House will get into a tax-cutting derby before the year is out, even though this hardly seems the time for such a thing. In addition to its renewed proposal for a capital gains tax cut—now broadened to cover sales of timber and real estate as well as stocks and bonds, to make it more politically attractive—the Administration is proposing a "Family Savings Plan," which would allow families earning up to a certain income to set aside five thousand dollars each year, which could earn tax free if left alone for seven years. One purpose of this plan was to encourage savings (though there is little evidence that such schemes as this, or Individual Retirement Accounts, do result in more savings); another was to establish that the President wasn't interested in helping only the rich. The Senate Democrats succeeded in blocking the President's capital gains tax cut last year, but key Democrats in both houses have already in effect conceded that they can't block it again this year—they hope only to help shape the proposal and perhaps wring some tax concession. And, as they did last year, some Democrats will offer their own proposals to broaden the tax advantages of Individual Retirement Accounts. And now the Democrats—as well as the Administration—are struggling with what to do about the proposal made by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, to cut Social Security taxes.

MOYNIHAN'S proposal, a brilliant stroke to call attention to some real problems, set this town on its ear. He proposed that the Social Security tax increase that went into effect at the first of this year, and the one scheduled for the next year as well, be repealed. Moynihan, who served as part of a bipartisan group that in 1983 recommended that in order to accumulate enough funds to pay for the baby boomers' retirement in the next century, payroll taxes should be increased and the surplus placed in a trust fund. However, the Administration—with the complaisance of the Congress—has been using the Social Security surplus to pay for ongoing programs, thus masking the real size of the deficit. If the Social Security surplus were removed, Bush's new budget would have a deficit of a hundred and forty-four billion rather than sixty-four billion—more than twice as large. (If all trust funds that hide the real size of the deficit were removed, it would be about three hundred billion.) Over the past six years, since the new arrangement went into effect, $142 billion in Social Security "surplus" funds have been spent for other purposes. Moynihan calls this use of the surplus "thievery." In making his proposal, Moynihan pointed out that from 1980 to 1988 the tax system became more regressive: Social Security taxes, which are regressive because rich and poor alike pay at the same rate and payment stops at the same income level, rose as a percentage of federal revenue by twenty-three per cent, while personal income taxes as a percentage of total federal revenue fell by six per cent and corporate income tax revenue fell by twenty-three per cent.

The explosion set off by Moynihan was somewhat accidental. He had said several times before that if the Social Security surplus wasn't kept in a trust fund he would move to return the system to pay-as-you-go, in which Social Security benefits are financed by contemporary workers, as they were prior to 1983. Actually, under present circumstances that is what we are back to, since one way or another the funds would have to be raised to pay for the baby boomers' retirement. On the Friday before the New Year's weekend, Moynihan held a press conference in the nearly deserted Capitol and announced that he would introduce a bill rolling back the next two Social Security tax increases. He had warned several times before that he would do this, but on a slow news day within a slow news period he got a great deal of attention. (Moynihan, of course, knows that this is how it works.) Moynihan had struck a nerve. All workers' payroll taxes went up as of January 1st, at a cost of up to six hundred dollars this year. Why, Moynihan asked, should Social Security taxes be used to pay for a capital gains tax cut that Bush was planning to propose again? A capital gains cut brings in revenue for the first couple of years, as people make additional transactions to take advantage of the lower tax, but then it loses money for the Treasury. (Darman has privately warned Moynihan that if he gets into a tax-cutting competition with the White House he's up against pros—people who've been at that game for nine years.) Furthermore, while federal income taxes were steadily lowered during the Reagan years (from seventy per cent for the top bracket to twenty-eight per cent, with some income taxed at thirty-three per cent), state and local taxes rose as federal funds were cut for various programs. In effect, the federal government has passed the tax burden on to state and local governments—whose taxes tend to be regressive. The result is that the total tax burden is higher than at any time since the end of the Second World War. So while Reagan claimed credit for lowering income taxes and federal spending, other taxes were rising, and a lot of people weren't better off. The situation was ripe for a tax revolt—as well as for reinforcing the view that federal taxes should not be increased.

Some Democrats couldn't quite believe that this wonderful gem had fallen into their hands—at last, a tax cut proposed by Democrats. Moreover, it would be a tax cut for lower- and middle-income people, just the constituency the Party was seeking, and by which it was being rejected. Many Democrats were excited by the prospect of juxtaposing their own tax cut for these groups against the President's capital gains tax cut, which would overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy. But there was a hitch: Moynihan's proposal would cost seven billion dollars in the current fiscal year and fifty-five billion dollars in the next one—the one covered by the new budget—at a time of agonizing efforts to get the deficit down. So Democrats were divided over whether to be fiscally responsible or to go with a politically tempting idea.

For the most part, the top congressional leaders, Foley, Mitchell, and the chairmen of the committees that have to raise revenues—Dan Rostenkowski, of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Lloyd Bentsen, of the Senate Finance Committee—were cool to the idea, some more so than others, because in the end they are the ones who have to put together a budget agreement, and they didn't want to add so much to the deficit. Moreover, Rostenkowski, unlike the Democratic leadership, has been outspoken in saying that taxes should be increased, preferably through a rise in the gasoline tax. Moynihan has also urged such a tax. Foley was



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particularly hesitant—more so than Mitchell—which put him somewhat at odds with Dick Gephardt, of Missouri, the House Majority Leader, who is more aggressive and more partisan than Foley. A group of younger House members has been meeting with Gephardt—as have some Democratic Party operatives—to urge him to support some form of the Moynihan proposal. Younger House members also went to Foley and urged him not to be against the Moynihan proposal in some form, on the ground that this would put the Democrats on the offensive for the first time in nine years. Numerous variations on the Moynihan proposal have been drawn up by various Democrats. Byron Dorgan, Democrat of North Dakota and one of the ringleaders of this group, says, "Some of us have decided that what we've been a party to is not working. We need a much bolder strategy and a much greater effort to take Bush on." A number of Democrats are bored with being "responsible," and figure that if Bush isn't going to be, why should they? They've watched the Republicans get away with—even prosper through—fiscal irresponsibility for some time, and they want to join the fun. But their elders prefer responsibility, and Foley, for one, isn't convinced that the long-run politics of the Moynihan proposal would be so great for the Democrats, once all the consequences sunk in. Yesterday, Bentsen came out against Moynihan's tax cut—though he may be interested in removing the Social Security trust fund from the funds that are counted against the Gramm-Rudman target. In the House, Democrats are working toward some other kind of tax relief—perhaps an income-tax credit—for the middle class. This would grant tax relief only to individuals, and not also to business, as Moynihan would, but it could still be costly.

The Moynihan proposal caused something of a crisis within the White House. Senior officials, including Darman, tended to think that the whole thing would go away soon, while people in the political jobs—the ones who do the liaison with Capitol Hill—didn't think it was that simple. A substantial number of Republicans were ready to sign on to Moynihan's proposal: supply-siders saw this as yet another way to cut taxes; other Republicans saw it as another way to force a cut in the size of government and also as good middle-class politics. People who operate small businesses were all for it, since business pays Social Security taxes for each worker. Top officials—Sununu, Vice-President Dan Quayle—were sent forth to stem the Republican hemorrhage. (Some Republicans had been talking last year about making the move Moynihan did, and regretted that he beat them to it.)

Top White House officials believed that as soon as the argument was made to the public that Moynihan's proposal would jeopardize future benefits (even though they had already been jeopardized—in fact, were gone), Moynihan's proposal would collapse. In his State of the Union address, Bush said, "The last thing we need to do is mess around with Social Security," and spokesmen for the Administration have been trying to give the impression—which is unwarranted—that Moynihan's proposal would jeopardize current Social Security benefits. (The American Association of Retired Persons came out against it at the end of last week.) Darman and the President have been stomping on the proposal, trying to drive a stake into it, but, in one form or another, it won't quite die.

In his budget the President offers a response to the Moynihan proposal: the budget will be balanced by fiscal year 1993, and at that point the Social Security surplus will no longer be counted against the deficit (both of these actions are already required by the Gramm-Rudman law); after that, some surplus Social Security funds will be put in something to be called the Social Security Integrity and Debt Reduction Fund, the amount deposited to reach the full Social Security surplus by 1996 (thus there would be no deficit at all); which would be used to retire the national debt. And, an Administration official says, with apparent seriousness, the entire debt would be retired sometime between 2008 and 2015, and then the economy will be buoyant enough to support the retiring "boomers." A number of observers, including some key Republican senators, think this whole scheme is sheer fantasy—starting with a balanced budget in three years.

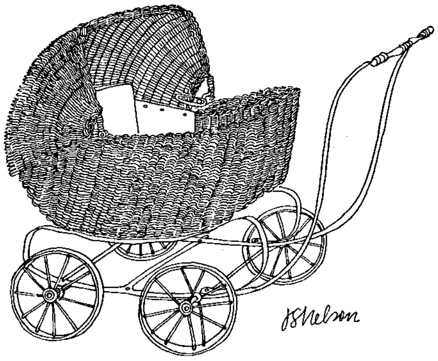
Both Moynihan and Darman have indicated that a compromise is possible, and Darman is looking at various possibilities. Administration officials have already said that they are willing to compromise on how soon the Social Security account will no longer be counted against the Gramm-Rudman total. What Darman wants to prevent is a vote on the Moynihan proposal to cut the taxes, which could be irresistible to the legislators.

SOME of the Democrats' sputtering at Darman at hearings last week would have been better directed at Darman's boss. (Some Democrats knew this, but the President is, after all, popular.) Darman may have his cynical streak, but he no doubt would prefer to have as his legacy that he had wrought serious budget reform. More than many of the people he works with—probably including the President—he has given serious thought to the real danger to the nation's well-being of allowing the inner cities to continue to rot, as well as to the horror of living in such places. But there's little he can do—even if he wants to—if the President he serves is not willing. And some of the outrage expressed by the Democrats stemmed from sheer frustration: a number of them have concluded that Darman has them in a box. The thermodynamics of the Gramm-Rudman law have changed.

The law had supposedly given both a Republican White House and a Democratic Congress a club with which to threaten the other: if the deficit target wasn't hit, the dread "sequestration"—automatic across-the-board cuts of federal programs—would occur. Because the Democrats had seen to it that certain programs of great importance to their constituencies were protected in the Gramm-Rudman law from sequestration, this gave them leverage. But that was at a time when the Administration was seeking constant increases in the defense budget. Then, last fall, Darman persuaded the President—over the protests of Defense Secretary Dick Cheney—that the Administration could live with a sequester. In fact, a partial sequester—lasting four months—was part of the final budget compromise between the President and Congress. Now, with the defense budget coming down, and with the Administration having shown that it's not afraid of a sequester, the Democrats are without their club. In fact, if Congress cuts defense funds deeply this year the Administration may prefer a sequester, to raise the amount to be spent for defense. However, since most of their pet programs are protected, numerous Democrats are relaxed about the idea of a sequester as well. So now the Gramm-Rudman law may have no club in it at all. The situation may be ripe for even more mischief than has gone on before. The main reasons for Congress to worry about a sequester are that it is an admission of failure and it's a stupid way to run the government.

NONETHELESS, the Pentagon is on the defensive in Congress for now. Predictably, the fact that the President's military budget calls for an actual increase in spending over last year (though by less than the rate of inflation) caused a collective clap of hands to foreheads on Capitol Hill, even though it has been known for at least two months that this would be the case. But ever since Cheney let it be known last November that he was contemplating a reduction in Pentagon spending of a hundred and eighty billion dollars over four years—something some members of Congress felt was a tactical mistake—people have been eagerly anticipating the prospective "peace dividend." (Such a thing was expected after the Vietnam War, but evanesced.) Not only did Bush's budget call for an increase in funds but it suggested no deletions of the most expensive or most advanced weapons—and it called for an increase of a billion dollars, for a total expenditure of $4.7 billion in the next fiscal year, for the Strategic Defense Initiative—and relied for savings instead on reduced personnel, cancellation of some minor weapons systems (some of these proposed cancellations were rejected by Congress last year), and closings of military bases. Of course, the President's defense budget—calling for $295 billion in fiscal-year 1991—was only the opening shot in the long war, and it was submitted in the knowledge that Congress would make cuts in it. The proposed base closings—thirty-five in the United States and twelve overseas—were instantly recognized by members of Congress as a setup. Such closings would cause economic pain to the districts in which they occurred, but if members of Congress yelped they would be accused by a pleased Administration of not really wanting to cut defense spending. (As it happens, by far most of the domestic bases are in districts represented by Democrats—twenty-two in Democratic districts, six in Republican districts, and the other seven in areas represented by both parties.) Furthermore, several congressmen recognized that they could be held hostage to such cuts. A House Democrat says, "The Administration can say, 'You want to change your vote on the B-2? We won't close your base.' " Representative Les Aspin, Democrat of Wisconsin and chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, may have rescued his colleagues already by proposing that the question of base closings be taken up by a new bipartisan commission, similar to the one that came up with eighty-six base closings last year, through a process that required members of Congress to cast only one painful vote.

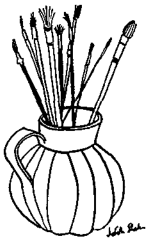
The problem the Pentagon faces is that there is precious little political consensus for keeping America as militarily strong as Cheney argues is necessary in light of the still uncertain situation in Eastern Europe and what he says is the continuing Soviet buildup of strategic weapons—and, especially in light of the uncertainty over Mikhail Gorbachev's future. Cheney also argues that the United States shouldn't make cuts that anticipate reductions that might be made through arms-control negotiations now under way over both strategic and conventional forces. This argument was, however, somewhat undermined by the President himself when he proposed in his State of the Union speech that both sides make cuts in conventional forces which go further than those already on the table. But even some members of Congress who think Cheney has a valid point about ongoing negotiations think his budget is politically untenable. Once again, the Pentagon is asking for two mobile strategic weapons—the multi-warhead MX, which exists now in silos but is to be put on railroad cars, and the Midgetman, a single-warhead missile. The Administration barely got money for both of these out of Congress last year. A senior defense official says that even if a treaty is reached on strategic arms, as things stand now there wouldn't be any great change in the Pentagon's plans—that the Pentagon's current modernization program was begun anticipating such an agreement.



Similarly, the President's new proposal to take American troops in Europe down from three hundred and five thousand to two hundred and twenty-five thousand (a number to be matched by the Soviet Union—though no one expects the Soviet Union to keep this number in Eastern Europe), or fifty thousand fewer than he had proposed to NATO last year, has been described by Pentagon officials as their bottom line, their floor. But some members of the Senate Armed Services Committee called the new floor a "ceiling." Cheney was constrained to say that he would be "flexible" about the number if, as various senators predicted and as he conceded was possible, Soviet troops were ejected from Eastern European nations, as those countries are now asking, and Germany was unified. Pentagon officials argue that the "new reality" they are being asked to conform to is as yet undefined, and they shouldn't be pushed to disarm too fast. The President's new figure for conventional forces in Europe was proposed by Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who described it in top-level meetings as one he could "live with." This number contemplates no change in NATO's "forward-defense" strategy, a forty-year-old doctrine that stipulates that Western Europe will be defended at the border between East and West Germany rather than allow an inch of West German soil to be taken by the Warsaw Pact while Western commanders decide where to throw in their reserve forces. This doctrine is costly in terms of the number of troops it requires and makes no military sense. Similarly, the defense budget calls for an additional eighty million dollars for research on a replacement for the Lance, a short-range nuclear missile, to be based in West Germany, which would be targeted on East Germany. West Germans haven't been keen on the deployment of such a weapon for some time, and in light of recent events can't be expected to be very enthusiastic about it.

Earlier this year, the White House told the Pentagon that the number of proposed United States troops in Europe needed to be lowered, and asked what the lowest number could be "within the current structure." The Administration had been insisting that it wouldn't negotiate on lower numbers until the first conventional-force-reduction treaty had been concluded. A senior Administration official says, "We had to go to a lower number in order to be relevant." The deliberations on whether to go to a new number, and, if so, what number, had been going on in earnest (as well as in secret) within the Administration since the first of the year. Pentagon officials resisted going to any lower number, arguing—correctly, as it turned out—that any new "floor" would quickly become a "ceiling." A Pentagon official says, "One of the reasons we were reluctant dragons on that was that we thought a new number would hold for twenty-four hours. That's about what's happened." The official continues, "The counterargument was that the old number had lost all credibility, which was true."

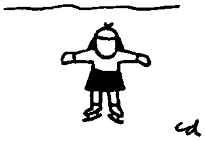
But the President's new proposal, which served him well politically for the moment, and gave him a headline for his State of the Union speech (it wasn't really germane to the speech), represented an attempt to play catch-up—his new proposal, like his old one, contemplates the stationing of more Soviet troops in Eastern Europe than the Eastern European nations wish to have there—and probably won't obtain for long. Pentagon officials are now bracing to argue that even if all Soviet troops were withdrawn from Eastern Europe, as the officials concede may happen before long, some United States troops should remain in Europe, so as to keep the NATO alliance alive. The officials know that this will be a "tough sell." Still, there are some real constraints on how far Congress can go in cutting the defense budget. If they can cut it by more than it would be cut by a sequester—eighteen billion dollars, or fourteen billion more than it has already been cut in real terms (counting inflation) by the Administration—the President could well opt for a sequester. Some House Democrats will vote against any Defense Department authorization bill, and most Republicans may object to deep cuts. Some members will oppose cuts in weapons manufactured in their districts. Finding a consensus will not be easy.



All sorts of people are making it difficult for the Pentagon to be supported by the sort of consensus it wants. Richard Perle, a Pentagon official during the Reagan Administration and as hard-line a policymaker as could be found, told the Senate Armed Services Committee recently that changes in Eastern Europe had already eliminated any possibility of a Soviet attack against Western Europe, and said that the Pentagon could cancel virtually all of the next generation of major tactical and strategic weapons, including a mobile MX or a Midgetman. Perle also said that "the canonical threat against which a defensive NATO alliance has long been poised is no longer credible." James Schlesinger, who was the Secretary of Defense in the Ford Administration, also in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, called for a radical reduction of United States troops in Europe, perhaps down to between seventy-five thousand and a hundred thousand, saying that the traditional role of such troops "has now been superseded." Last week, the three past chairmen of the Joint Chiefs testified before the committee that both the mobile MX and Midgetman could be cancelled (under questioning, two of them began to qualify their position). The chiefs' testimony reflected a break with the doctrine we had been presented with throughout the eighties—that our land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles have a "window of vulnerability" that the Soviets could exploit—and it even raised the heretical thought, held by a growing number of others who used to be in the mainstream of nuclear doctrine, that there's no likelihood the Soviets would risk launching an attack on our land-based missiles. A lot of people have been trying to tell them this for a long time.

In December, Pentagon officials were saying that the real results of its review of how to reverse the buildup of the last decade wouldn't show up until April, when it submits a new long-range plan to Congress. Now that new deadline seems to be slipping as well. A senior Administration official says, "They caved in to pressure to say they were going to make big changes in the April budget, but they can't responsibly do it. They won't have much more information then than they have now. They're really flailing around over there." One day after the budget was submitted to Congress, Cheney told reporters that he was considering further cuts in aircraft—the B-2 Stealth bomber, airlift planes, and tactical fighters; a Pentagon official says there hadn't been enough time to get decisions made on this before the budget was completed. A White House official says that some cuts in the defense budget—about six billion dollars' worth—were forced on the Pentagon in mid-December by Darman, who had convinced the President and others that there was no way Congress was going to vote the money the Pentagon was asking for. Darman sprinkled his own little peace dividend about politically popular domestic programs—Head Start and other education programs, environmental programs—as well as on a project dear to his own heart, the proposed manned landing on Mars. (This would cost as much as four hundred billion dollars.) The White House official says, "The Defense Department crowd always tried to get past the immediate budget and say, 'The next time we'll be serious,' and some probably felt they truly needed more time to do new analysis." He adds, "They're looking at it as a free-fall; they're trying to find brakes to stop the free-fall. They make up arguments they hope will work, and if they don't work they make up a new argument."

WHILE all of these domestic arguments have been going on, much of the attention here has of course been focussed on the Soviet Union. Obviously, the uncertainty about Mikhail Gorbachev's future vastly complicates the job of making policy. Some top officials speak of Gorbachev as a man who has "a moving bottom line," a phenomenon they find both intriguing and perplexing. Time after time—in Lithuania as well as in Moscow—he has shown himself willing to do things he had just said were impossible. The recent civil unrest in Azerbaijan, to which Gorbachev sent Soviet troops, put policymakers here perilously close to a question that they had been avoiding. The operative policy, as stated several times by Secretary of State James Baker—and Baker has said that top Soviet officials understand this—is that it would not be acceptable for Gorbachev to use troops to suppress independence movements in Eastern Europe (Gorbachev had obviously come to the conclusion that this wasn't a viable proposition anyway) or in the Baltics (this doesn't look likely, either), but that the United States would understand if troops had to be used to quell ethnic violence within the Soviet Union. The question our policymakers don't answer—probably because they don't have an answer for it—is what our reaction would be if Soviets used force to put down independence movements within the Soviet Union, which contains several restive republics. The situation in Azerbaijan was part ethnic violence—between Azerbaijanis and Armenians—and part an independence movement by Azerbaijanis. As the situation cooled, Administration officials were relieved, but the unanswered question is likely to arise again. Increasingly, officials here have come to see Gorbachev uneasily sitting atop a potentially revolutionary situation: independence movements within the Soviet Union; a resurgent Russian nationalism that carries with it reaction against the Communist revolution (and even some nonarchism); worker movements that could cause strikes that would paralyze the country.



This week's extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which, amid a stormy three-day debate, approved Gorbachev's proposal to change Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution, which had guaranteed the Party's control over the political structure, and to move toward a presidential system is seen here as a milestone but not a solution to Gorbachev's problems. Some officials had been expecting Gorbachev to move against the Party's power, because it had become such an obstacle to his efforts at reforming the Soviet economy as well as its political system. And they felt that Gorbachev had no choice, because, as was pointed out during the Party meeting, there is in effect already a multiparty situation in the Soviet Union. For that reason, an official here says, this struggle was different from earlier intra-Kremlin struggles—"because you have all those currents out there: conservative, trade unionist, ethnic, and the rest." Gorbachev, this reasoning goes, had no choice but to try to break the Party's power. Key figures in the Soviet Union felt that the country was on the brink of an abyss, something had to be done. Some figures pointed to Eastern Europe, and said the Soviet Union was not immune to what had happened there. The danger was, reformers pointed out, that they could end up like former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

But officials here are uncomfortably aware that the dramatic action that took place this week (not all of the Party plenum's decisions are known yet) does nothing in itself to ameliorate the Soviet Union's dire economic situation or resolve its internal struggles for independence. And, they point out, pluralism can make things more difficult for Gorbachev and also—as has already been seen—release some unpleasant forces, such as anti-Semitism, and inter-ethnic hatreds.

Secretary of State James Baker is in Moscow now, where his formal agenda is to make more progress in arms control, preparatory to the summit meeting to be held by Bush and Gorbachev in the United States, now scheduled for June. But he will obviously be sizing up the situation, and talking about such questions as German reunification, on which all of the major parties seem to be coming to an agreement—that Germany will stay in NATO but no NATO troops will be stationed in the former East Germany. But they have little choice, since the Germans are determined to reunite. In the current climate, arms control seems almost an afterthought, and some officials felt almost sheepish about trying at this point to engage the Soviet leaders in discussions of SLCMs (sea-launched cruise missiles) and counting rules. Not very long ago, the United States' relationship with the Soviet Union was such that arms control was the central subject between the two nations, and fights over key issues were tremendous. Arms control became the thermometer of the relationship. Now it is on the periphery.

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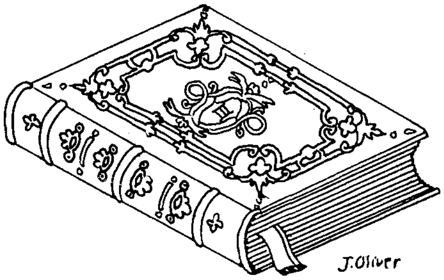
BOOKS

Long Lost

BETWEEN the final words of "Gravity's Rainbow," "Now everybody—," calling us to sing together in the last moment before the silent rocket hits, and the first words of "Vineland" (Little, Brown; $19.95), "Later than usual one summer morning in 1984, Zoyd Wheeler drifted awake," is a gap of nearly seventeen years. In that time Thomas Pynchon has lain low, vanished into the underground or some self-devised witness-protection program, surfacing only occasionally and briefly—a few short essays, the introduction to a collection of his early stories, a handful of jacket blurbs for other writers' books—like a groundhog poking his head out of his hole for a quick look around. This time, Pynchon is taking a good, long look, and that's a hopeful sign: evidence that the pitiless reactionary winter that has been our weather for the last decade and a half might be nearing its end. "Vineland" is about people waking up unusually late, beginning to stir for the first time since the late sixties. One character, trying to fill in some missing history for a teen-age girl, says, "It's been what, 15 years, just about your lifetime, full of playin' make-believe, acting on faiths in things that sound crazy now, lying, turning each other in, too much time passed, everybody remembering a different story—" In "Vineland" all the different stories resolve themselves into one, something that everybody, even kids, can understand: a fairy tale about a whole country under an evil spell. And by the end of the book Pynchon, brewing and mixing promiscuously, seems to have broken the spell, revived the sleeping beauties of American life.

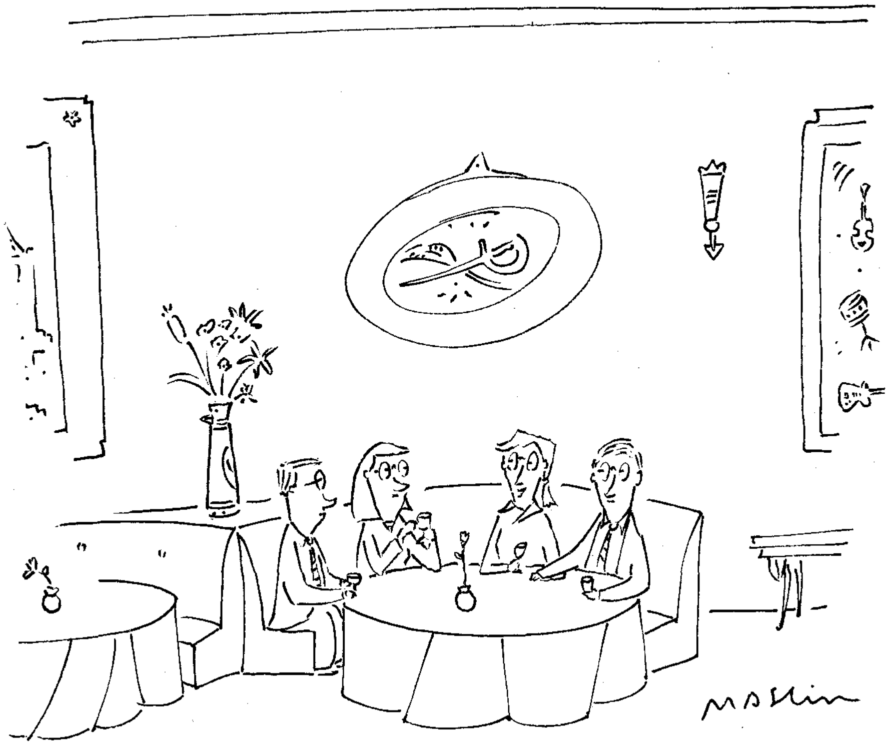
The novel begins and ends in the enchanted redwood forest of Vineland County, in Northern California, a mythical community of loggers, aging hippies, marijuana growers, and a group of not quite dead folks known as Thanatoids. But most of the action takes place in the territory of the past, which is truly another country, remote and embargoed, accessible only to the obsessed; everyone else is trapped in the flat present of television. (Even if we suspect there's something wrong, we have no idea what it is and we've forgotten how to find out.) In the opening pages of "Vineland" we follow Zoyd Wheeler—an amiable, pot-addled schlemiel who lives with his teen-age daughter, Prairie—as he goes about his business: dressing in women's clothing and hurling himself through the window of the Cucumber Lounge (for the local-news cameras), so he can qualify for a mental-disability check; meeting with a crazed Drug Enforcement Agency man, Hector Zuñiga, who has been trying since the sixties to get him to turn informant ("It was a romance over the years at least as persistent as Sylvester and Tweety's"); finally taking it on the lam when his house is seized by "a Justice Department strike force [with] military backup" under the command of the sinister federal prosecutor Brock Vond. For a while, it's all light weirdness, hippie humor of an unusually high grade, a series of deft, mellow riffs; Pynchon's writing in these passages might make you think of gray, paunchy Jerry Garcia noodling his way through the Grateful Dead songs he has been playing for a couple of decades. Wonderful as this old-guy rock and roll is, we suspect, with some disappointment, that it's *only* rock and roll. But it isn't.

The jokes in the first seventy pages or so of "Vineland" reveal themselves, much later, to be more than jokes: they're the residue of old crimes, shady deals, unavenged betrayals turned weightless and transparent in the thin air of the present. Zoyd, the lovable zany, disappears for practically the rest of the book, and sharp little Prairie takes over as the story's emotional center. She has a livelier sense than Zoyd that something's missing from their lives, something she should know but no one's telling her. She's too cool to admit it, but the ambience of stoned wackiness doesn't satisfy all her needs; and everything that has happened—the state's abruptly swooping down on her and her father and dispossessing them—seems to have to do with her mother, Frenesi, who vanished when Prairie was a baby. The pressure of events, interrupting a generally snoozy, uneventful existence, brings out the Nancy Drew side of her; only slightly more willingly than Oedipa Maas, the girl detective of "The Crying of Lot 49," Prairie sets off into the secret, unspeakable past, in search of her legacy.



What she finds, with the help of a peculiar couple—DL Chastain, a female Ninja who's an old friend of Frenesi's, and Takeshi Fumimota, a speed freak who runs a "karmic adjustment" service out of a Thanatoid hangout called the Zero Inn—is more strangeness, but of a different kind: not the anomic everyday unreality of her life in Vineland but a more densely textured madness, a dance of obscure compulsions. Everything comes down to the twisted relationship between Frenesi and Brock Vond, the helpless mutual attraction of an arrogantly beautiful sixties radical and a methodical fascist. When, about halfway through the book, Pynchon gets down to the task of telling us, and Prairie, the full, sad story of what happened at the end of the sixties, the writing takes on a darker tone: rapt, horrified, mournful. It's an anatomy of betrayal; a frame-by-frame analysis of the moment when everything turned, when the long troubled sleep, the death in the soul, really began; and a new version of the oldest story in the world—the original sin and the exile from Paradise.

Heavy, we might say (eyes closed, head bobbing slowly up and down, as if we were trancing out on a dense, extended, feedback-distorted guitar solo, replaying our worn copy of "Are You Experienced?"). Sure, Pynchon is out to create a mythic history of our muddled and narcoleptic times, but he has the good grace—the grace of American pop culture at its casual, lowdown best—to take his big themes by surprise, cutting in on them in mid-dance, spinning them around the floor a few times, then bopping off somewhere else, with a little thanks-for-a-good-time wave. What makes his vision of America so persuasive is that he shows us a country in which serious things keep happening to people who are trying, on the whole, not to take things too seriously—whose attempts at "seriousness" are, more often than not, just the manic gravity of children at play. And he finds this play beautiful, recognizes it (as virtually no other big-deal literary novelists do) as an essential part of his own character, and maybe not the very worst part, at that. He's famous for his Byzantine plots, his complex patterns of metaphor, his elaborate paranoia, but his sympathies are always, unambiguously, with the plotted-against: the schlemiels and human yo-yos, the fun-loving goofballs, the dazed innocents who just want to be left alone—Benny Profane in "V.," Tyrone Slothrop in "Gravity's Rainbow," Oedipa in "Lot 49," Zoyd and Prairie here. He seems at times almost ashamed of his ferocious ingenuity, his literary facility, his taste for intricate structures, as if all this were evidence of a hideous and grinning demon inside him, a Brock Vond that never gets sent up the river for his crimes.


"No, no fights yet—we're still circling each other."

The story of Frenesi and Brock, the heart of the novel, is a screwball tragedy, the Road Runner and the Coyote as Romeo and Juliet. They meet, at the book's dead center, in classic thirties-comedy style, trading barbed double entendres, apparently hating each other on sight. Earlier, Pynchon prefigures this fateful moment with a brilliant parody of it, in the first encounter of DL and Takeshi, the novel's good couple. Obeying the rules of romantic comedy, they "meet cute," with a vengeance. DL, hired by a mafioso to assassinate Brock Vond, is disguised as Frenesi, complete with contact lenses that blur her vision so she can't see that the man to whom she is applying the Vibrating Palm (or Ninja Death Touch) in the midst of intercourse isn't the evil prosecutor but hapless Takeshi, who has been mistaken for Vond by the mob's dumb goons. He is confused, but decides, as DL begins to seduce him, to relax and go with the moment—unaware that in a year he'll be due to keel over dead. When they discover the unfortunate error (Takeshi, in a splendid comic-book moment, exclaiming, "My own sleaziness—has done me in!"), they manage to reverse the Death Touch, and then enter into a contract to stick together, with DL commanded to "balance your karmic account by working off the great wrong you have done him." Like everything else that seems random and eccentric in "Vineland," this pulp-fiction romance has a point: the macabre coupling of DL and Takeshi is an alternate take, salvaged from the cutting-room floor, of the grim union of Frenesi and Brock, a vision preserved of the absurd comedy that this relationship, in a better world (or movie), would have remained.

But in this world, "the spilled, the broken world" that Pynchon is compelled to acknowledge, Frenesi and Brock have no benign karmic forces to call up in time of need, nothing to rely on but their own contradictory characters, the tangled family history mapped on their chromosomes. American history plays itself out in their bed—bad news, especially for Frenesi. On her mother's side, she comes from a strong union family, with roots in Vineland; she was brought up, though, in Hollywood, her father a gaffer, in charge of the lighting on studio pictures, until the blacklist hit. To her mother, Sasha, "the blacklist period . . . thick with betrayal, destructiveness, cowardice, and lying, seemed only a continuation of the picture business as it has always been carried on, only now in political form." Sasha says, "History in this town is no more worthy of respect than the average movie script, and it comes about in the same way—soon as there's one version of a story, suddenly it's anybody's pigeon. Parties you never heard of get to come in and change it. Characters and deeds get shifted around, heartfelt language gets pounded flat when it isn't just removed forever. By now the Hollywood fifties is this way-over-length, multitude-of-hands rewrite—except there's no sound, of course, nobody talks. It's a silent movie." Frenesi finds herself in the picture business, too, in the sixties, as part of a radical documentary-film collective known as 24fps—a true believer in the power of the camera, "in the ability of close-ups to reveal and devastate," and in the merciless truth of strong light. She meets Vond through the lens of "her faithful 16mm Canon Scoopic," zooming in on him as she films in an Oregon courthouse lobby, but it's she, not her subject, who's revealed and devastated: he's got star quality. (So much for light; she falls in love with the Prince of Darkness.) Frenesi is, as Prairie will be later, the victim of something inherited from her mother. Sasha, it seems, has always had a bit of a uniform fetish, a shameful, politically incorrect attraction to men in authority. What was no more than a quirk, a sick joke, in

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Sasha's character is a catastrophe in her daughter's.

"Brock Vond's genius was to have seen in the activities of the sixties left not threats to order but unacknowledged desires for it," Pynchon tells us. "Brock saw the deep—if he'd allowed himself to feel it, the sometimes touching—need only to stay children forever, safe inside some extended national Family." Frenesi's desire for order—in the masterful form of Brock himself—culminates in a monstrous act of treachery. She fingers a shambling, inept campus political guru named Weed Atman (another schlemiel, and a lover of Frenesi's) as a traitor, and slips a gun, supplied by Brock, to another activist leader. (When the prosecutor shows her the gun, she protests, pathetically, "Come on, it's only rock and roll," which couldn't be further from the truth.) Years later, in the split-level home of a surviving member of 24fps, Prairie watches the footage of the climax, the exact moment of Weed's murder somehow missed as the cameraman changes rolls, but the full horror clear enough: Frenesi herself lighted the scene. Just before Weed is shot, the camera picks up "not only the look on his face . . . but the way that what he was slowly understanding spread to his body, a long, stunned cringe, a loss of spirit that could almost be seen on the film . . . some silvery effluent, vacating his image, the real moment of his passing." This raw, unedited piece of film is, of course, the record of the death of the sixties. Or, rather, of the moment when the spirit of a playful, childish time departed the body of ordinary life, passed into the region of vacated images—part of the big-screen silent movie, continuously unreeling, that ultimately replaced experience, glazed our memories, turned us into an extended national family of spectators. It's a terrible and paradoxical image: a quick flaring of consciousness, a last-minute recognition, snuffed out before it can be assimilated or acted on—knowledge arrested at the fruitless, immature stage of simple disillusion.

In the aftermath, Weed enters the ranks of the Thanatoids, the sleepless and the powerless, and ends up wandering through Vineland County with all the other unavenged victims of the country's unconfessed sins; Frenesi, self-appalled, drops out of sight, marries Zoyd, gives birth to Prairie, and then, in a deal engineered by Vond, abandons her family and retreats into the anonymity of the Witness Protection program, to live with what she has done. "She had been privileged to live outside of Time, to enter and leave at will, looting and manipulating, weightless, invisible," Pynchon writes. "Now Time had claimed her again, put her under house arrest, taken her passport away. Only an animal with a full set of pain receptors after all." And Prairie, let into the secret of her heritage at last, through the ambiguous magic of the movies, is left to ponder the images: "Her mom, in front of her own eyes, had stood with a 1,000-watt Mickey-Mole spot on the dead body of a man who had loved her, and the man who'd just killed him, and the gun she'd brought him to do it with. Stood there like the Statue of Liberty, bringer of light, as if it were part of some contract to illuminate, instead of conceal, the deed. With all the footage of Frenesi she'd seen, all the other shots that had come by way of her eye and body, this hard frightening light, this white outpouring, had shown the girl most accurately, least mercifully, her mother's real face." It's a media kid's primal scene: the sight of her mother in bed with a dreadful and absolute figure of authority, screwing and being screwed and, in her transports, without the will to sort out the difference. Like every moment of historical lucidity in "Vineland," this one comes a little late; Prairie is seeing at fourteen what she should have seen long before. But in this case, Pynchon seems to say, it's not *too* late; Prairie is still young, not yet so done in by life that ugly truths send her running for cover.

In the final section of the novel, a softer illumination takes over: "the light of Vineland, the rainy indifference with which it fell on surfaces, the call to attend to territories of the spirit," the fairy-tale light of resolution, retribution, reconciliation. And the story of America in the sixties and the seventies—worked on, like the movie scripts Sasha describes, by a multitude of anonymous hands until it became perfectly mute—seems to have at last found its voice again. History, poor pigeon, has finally made its way home—for once, carrying a readable message, in heartfelt language. "Vineland," for all its wild, abrupt turnings, is the clearest novel Thomas Pynchon has written. Drawing both its frame of reference and its extraordinary energy from popular culture, the book has a congenial, unthreatening surface; it doesn't have the encyclopedic grandeur of the earlier novels, the head-spinning structural complexity. For some of his fans, and for the most obsessed of his academic exegetes, the Pynchon of "Vineland" may seem a ghost of his former self. But after all those years away he has come back to haunt us with an urgent purpose—has simplified his means so we won't be able to mistake what he's saying. This novel is as funny, as smart, as lyrical, and as subversive as any American fiction of the past decade, but the most remarkable thing about it is the purity of its desire to get through to us. These days, Pynchon seems to be writing out of the deepest, most uncontrollable motive for speech: the need to pass along what he has learned before it's lost forever.

Not that there's anything didactic about his manner: this history lesson seeps into us as gently as sun in a forest, as insidiously as a song heard over and over on the radio. The setting for the novel's verdant, "Midsummer Night's Dream"-like final act is the annual reunion in Vineland of Frenesi's family, generations together under the trees, "spinning and catching strands of memory, perilously reconnecting—as all around them the profusion of aunts, uncles, cousins, and cousins' kids and so on, themselves each with a story weirder than the last, creatively improved on over the years, came and went, waving corncobs in the air, dribbling soda on their shirts, swaying or dancing . . . while the fragrance of barbecue smoke came drifting down from the pits." With this lovingly detailed vision of untidy, free-form family happiness, Pynchon is actually trying to reëvoke what he calls "the green free America of [our] childhoods": a phrase that popped up earlier, while Zoyd and another sixties survivor are sitting around listening to "The Best of Sam Cooke." "Vineland" is Pynchon's version of "Wonderful World," a beautiful and wholly convincing imagining of life turning out O.K. for us dumb American kids, even though we don't know much about history (or biology, either). Pynchon,

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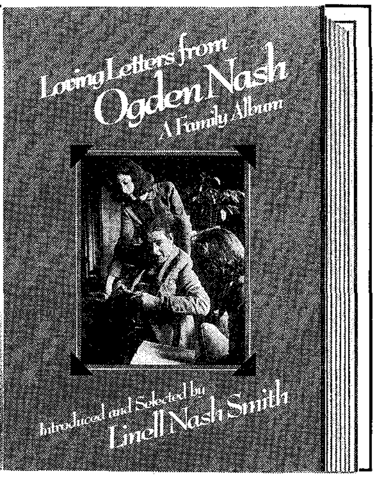

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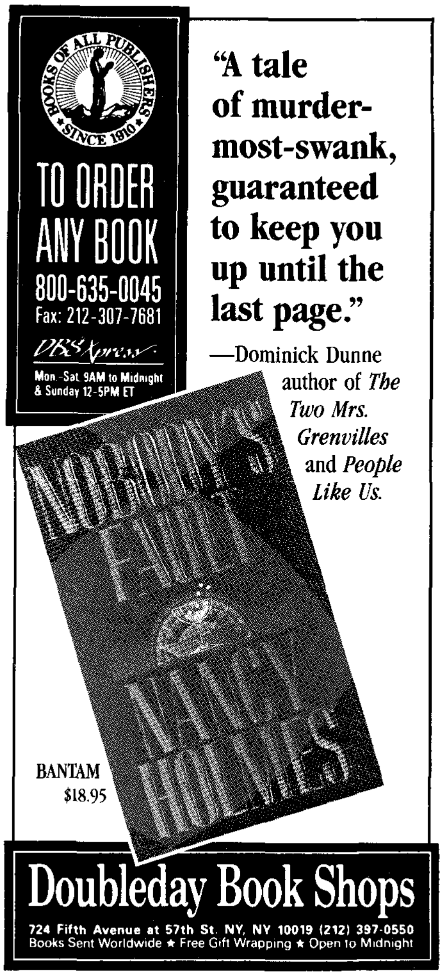
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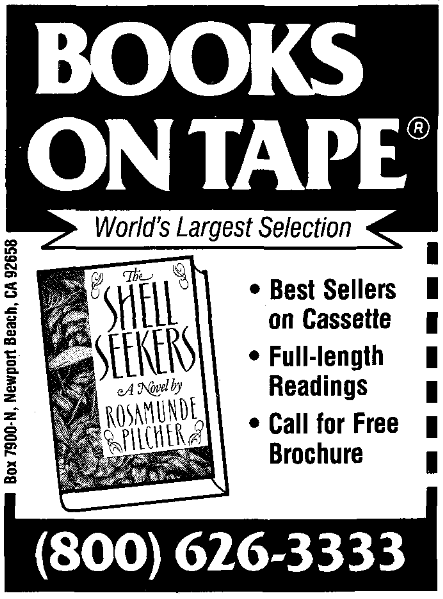
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the long-lost relative, has turned up again, only slightly changed, and still (improbably) eager to get that big sing-along going, to whip our flawed, disparate voices into an enveloping chorus. It sounds better than we could have hoped. —Terrence Rafferty

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Family Planning, by Tim Parks (Grove Weidenfeld; $17.95). When Brenda and Frank Baldwin return to England from Algiers to retire, with their barely manageable schizophrenic son, Raymond, their other children are thrown into a state of agitation; life, they privately feel, is complicated enough already. Handsome unemployed Garry spends his time volunteering for the ungrateful Liberal Party and assiduously ducking romantic or fiscal responsibilities of any kind; Graham, his twin, is happy to embrace Thatcher's Britain, but fears that crazy Raymond is a perpetual threat to his well-laid plans; Lorna cannot seem to finish her book on the pop band Crackle, and spends her time instead squabbling with her husband and worrying that their second child will turn out like Raymond. As unwelcome visits are made and recriminatory letters exchanged, a resolutely unsentimental and very entertaining portrait of the Baldwins emerges. Like Raymond himself, this family is, by turns, pathetic, hilarious, monstrous, and familiar, and its members can seem eminently reasonable one moment and utterly frightening the next. It is a mark of the author's ability that, somewhat to our alarm and discomfort, we come to care about them all far more than we meant to.

Note: "Sweet Talk," a collection of stories by Stephanie Vaughn, has been published by Random House ($16.95). Some of the stories originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

GENERAL

Sara Coleridge, A Victorian Daughter: Her Life and Essays, by Bradford Keyes Mudge (Yale; $30). This poignant and powerful scholarly study reconsiders Samuel Taylor Coleridge's daughter Sara (1802-52), who collated, edited, and explicated her father's manuscripts so as to reincarnate the Romantic poet and essayist as a Christian sage. Mr. Mudge believes that Sara used filial devotion as a means of self-expression at a time when intellectual activity was all but forbidden to women. Paradoxically, her father's conservatism, which she publicized and popularized, reinforced the repression and devaluation of the literary activities of women. This book is historically, artistically, and psychologically astute, and persuades us that Sara had a first-rate mind. Its most moving passage, though, appears in a fragment of a memoir Sara wrote for her daughter Edith, about a stay at the Wordsworths', with her father, when she was six. It is a recollection of herself, the child of separated parents, visiting an unsympathetic household, where she knows that she is failing all the adults' tests, and can't do anything about it.

Soldiers of God: With the Mujahidin in Afghanistan, by Robert D. Kaplan (Houghton Mifflin; $19.95). An affecting and informative report by an American journalist, who believes that the Afghans' struggle for self-determination has been both underreported and misreported in the West, mainly because few Westerners have been able to enter, or survive, Afghanistan in rebellion. His account of the rebel groups with whom he infiltrated the country portrays a range of patriots (some Westernized, others not), while illuminating the differences among the various Mujahidin factions. Mr. Kaplan tells exciting, scary stories, yet also manages to answer a number of important political questions. He thinks that the United States erred in funnelling aid to the Afghans through the government of Pakistan, for under Zia, at any rate, the Pakistanis were seeking puppets rather than independent Afghan leaders, and their military thinking was often too rigid to meet the needs of guerrillas.

•

RAISED EYEBROWS DEPARTMENT

[*Photo caption in a Sunday supplement to the Berkshire* (*Mass.*) *Eagle*]

Whether it's traditional roses and tulips or a cluster of more exotic blooms, the bouquet adds a fresh finishing touch to the bride's ensemble. Her gown, above, is from the After Sex Bridal Collection.

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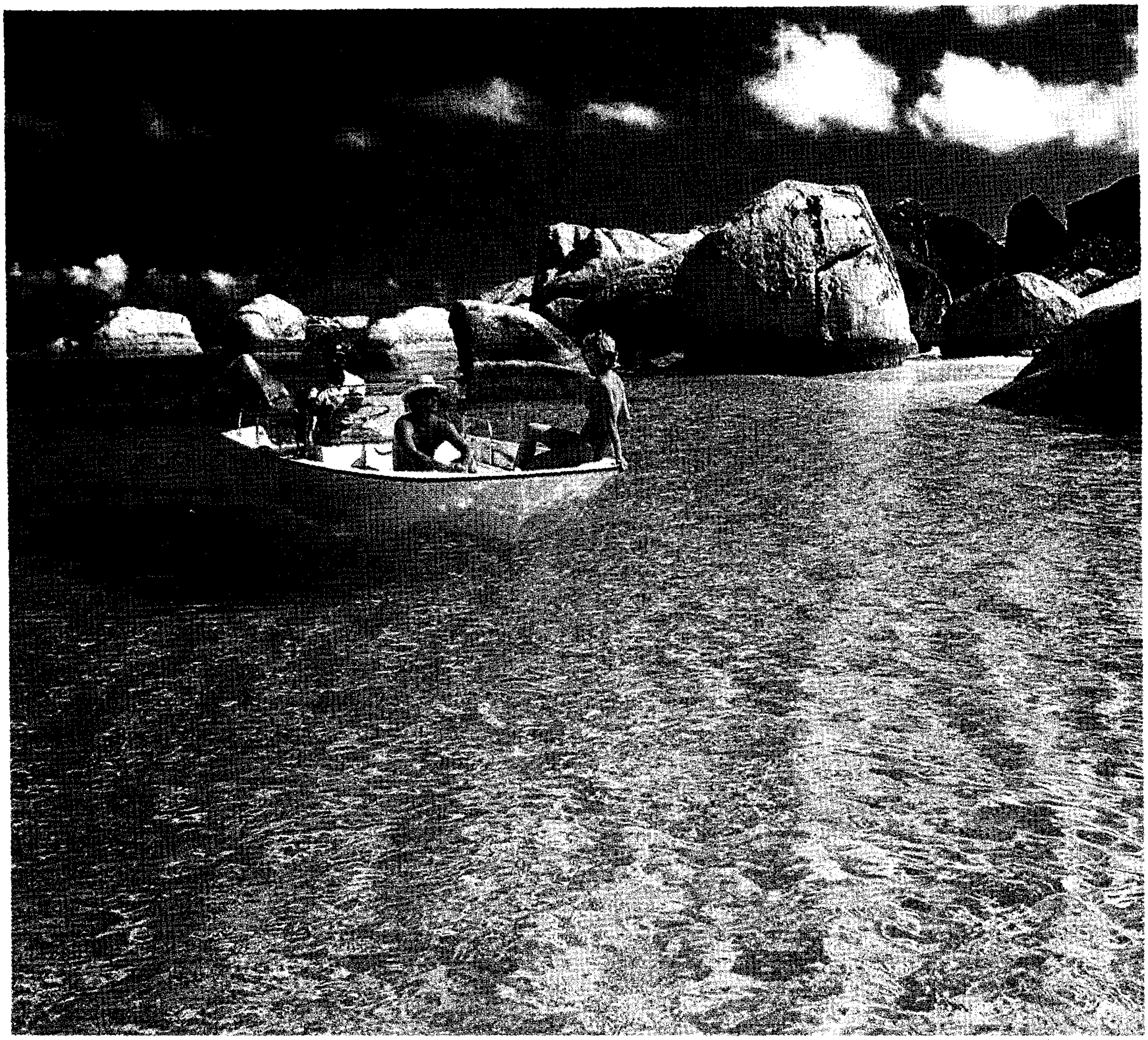

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